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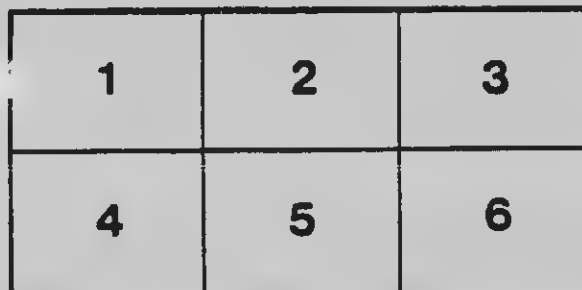
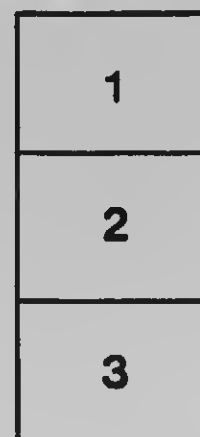
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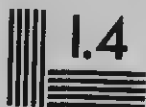
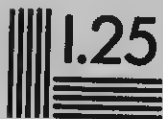
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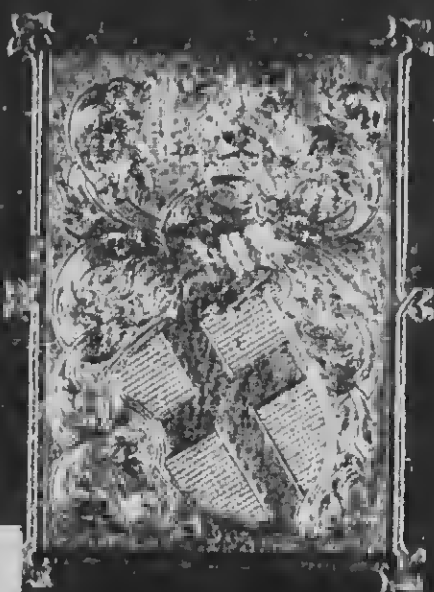
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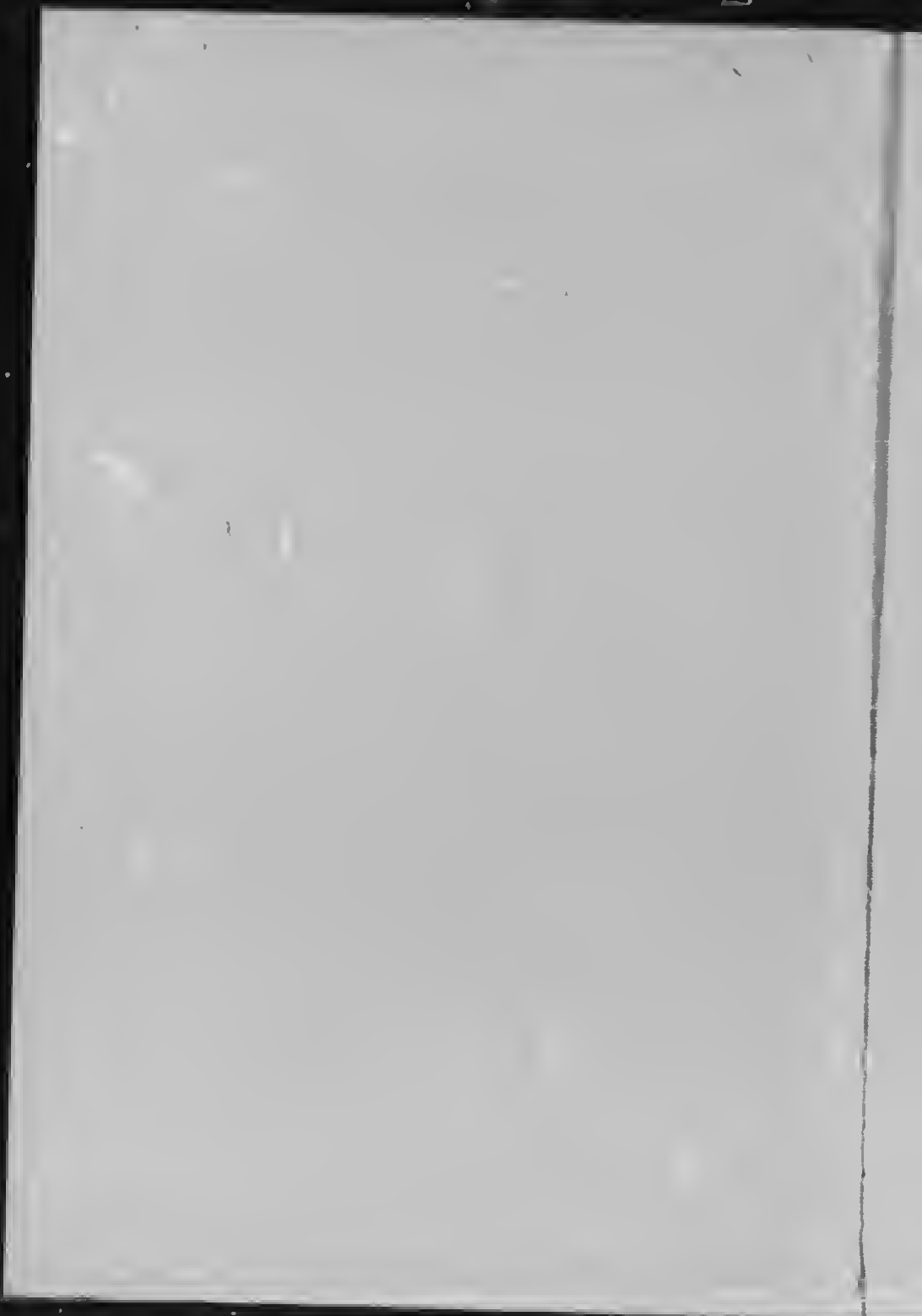
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EVANGELINE

AND

MILES STANDISH



EVANGELINE
AND
MILES STANDISH

BY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW



TORONTO
THE MUSSON BOOK CO., LIMITED

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E83

1913

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EVANGELINE.

A TALE OF ACADIE.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE story of "EVANGELINE" is founded on a painful occurrence which took place in the early period of British colonization in the northern part of America.

In the year 1713, Acadia, or, as it is now named, Nova Scotia, was ceded to Great Britain by the French. The wishes of the inhabitants seem to have been little consulted in the change, and they with great difficulty were induced to take the oaths of allegiance to the British Government. Some time after this, war having again broken out between the French and British in Canada, the Acadians were accused of having assisted the French, from whom they were descended, and connected by many ties of friendship, with provisions and ammunition, at the siege of Beau Séjour. Whether the accusation was founded on fact or not, has not been satisfactorily ascertained; the result, however, was most disastrous to the primitive, simple-minded Acadians. The British Government ordered them to be removed from their homes, and dispersed throughout the other colonies, at a distance from their much-loved land. This resolution was not communicated to the inhabitants till measures had been matured to carry it into immediate

effect ; when the Governor of the colony, having issued a summons calling the whole people to a meeting, informed them that their lands, tenements, and cattle of all kinds were forfeited to the British crown, that he had orders to remove them in vessels to distant colonies, and they must remain in custody till their embarkation.

The poem is descriptive of the fate of some of the persons involved in these calamitous proceedings.

THIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
 Bearded with moss, and in garments green,
 indistinct in the twilight,
 Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
 Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
 Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighbouring ocean
 Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval ; but where are the hearts that beneath it
 Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman ?
 Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—

Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water
the woodlands,

Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an
image of heaven?

Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers
for ever departed !

Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty
blasts of October

Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle
them far o'er the ocean.

Nought but tradition remains of the beautiful
village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and
endures, and is patient,

Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of
woman's devotion,

List to the mournful tradition still sung by the
pines of the forest ;

List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the
happy.

PART THE FIRST.

I.

IN the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin
of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of
Grand-Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched
to the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks
without number.
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised
with labour incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides ; but at stated seasons
the floodgates
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will
o'er the meadows.
West and south there were fields of flax, and
orchards and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain, and
away to the northward
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on
the mountains

Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the
mighty Atlantic
Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their
station descended.
There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the
Acadian village.
Strongly built were the houses, with frames of
oak and of chestnut,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the
reign of the Henries.
Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows ;
and gables projecting
Over the basement below protected and shaded
the doorway.
There, in the tranquil evenings of summer, when
brightly the sunset
Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes on
the chimneys,
Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and
in kirtles
Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning
the golden
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles
within doors
Mingled their sound with the whirl of the wheels
and the songs of the maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish priest,
and the children
Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended
to bless them.
Reverend walked he among them ; and up rose
matrons and maidens,
Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate
welcome.
Then came the labourers home from the field, and
serenely the sun sank
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon
from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of
the village
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense
ascending,
Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace
and contentment.
Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian
farmers,—
Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike
were they free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the
voice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to
their windows ;

But their dwellings were open as day and the
hearts of the owners ;
There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived
in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer
the Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of
Grand-Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres ; and with him, direct-
ing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride
of the village.
Stalworth and stately in form was the man of
seventy winters ;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered
with snow-flakes ;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks
as brown as the oak-leaves.
Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen
summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on
the thorn by the way-side,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the
brown shade of her tresses !

Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that
feed in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers
at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth
was the maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the
bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest
with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings
upon them,
Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet
of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue,
and the ear-rings,
Brought in the olden time from France, and since,
as an heir-loom,
Handed down from mother to child, through long
generations.
But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal
beauty—
Shone on her face and encircled her form, when,
after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God's bene-
diction upon her.

When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing
of exquisite music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of
the farmer

Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea ;
and a shady

Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine
wreathing around it.

Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath ;
and a footpath

Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in
the meadow.

Under the sycamore-tree were hives overhung by
a penthouse,

Such as the traveller sees in regions remote by the
road-side,

Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image
of Mary.

Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was the
well with its moss-grown

Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough
for the horses.

Shielding the house from storms, on the north,
were the barns and the farmyard :

There stood the broad-wheeled wains and the
antique ploughs and the harrows ;

There were the folds for the sheep ; and here, in
his feathered seraglio,
Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock,
with the selfsame
Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent
Peter.
Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a
village. In each one
Far o'er the gable projected a roof of thatch ; and
a staircase,
Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the odorous
corn-loft.
There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek and
innocent inmates
Murmuring ever of love ; while above in the
variant breezes
Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang
of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the
farmer of Grand-Pré
Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline governed
his household.
Many a youth, as he knelt in the church and
opened his missal,

Fixed his eyes upon her, as the saint of his
deepest devotion ;
Happy was he who might touch her hand or the
hem of her garment !
Many a suitor came to her door, by the darkness
befriended,
And as he knocked and waited to hear the sound
of her footsteps,
Knew not which beat the louder, his heart or the
knocker of iron ;
Or at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint of the
village,
Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the dance as
he whispered
Hurried words of love, that seemed a part of the
music.
But, among all who came, young Gabriel only was
welcome ;
Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the black-
smith,
Who was a mighty man in the village, and
honoured of all men,
For since the birth of time, throughout all ages
and nations,
Has the craft of the smith been held in repute by
the people.

Basil was Benedict's friend. Their children from
earliest childhood
Grew up together as brother and sister; and
Father Felician,
Priest and pedagogue both in the village, had
taught them their letters
Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns of the
church and the plain-song.
But when the hymn was sung, and the daily lesson
completed,
Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of Basil the
blacksmith.
There at the door they stood, with wondering eyes
to behold him
Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse as a
plaything,
Nailing the shoe in its place; while near him the
tire of the cart-wheel
Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a circle of
cinders.
Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the gather-
ing darkness
Bursting with light seemed the smithy, through
every cranny and crevice,
Warm by the forge within they watched the
labouring bellows,

And as its panting ceased, and the sparks expired
in the ashes,

Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns going
into the chapel.

Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the swoop of
the eagle,

Down the hill-side bounding, they glided away
o'er the meadow.

Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous
nest on the rafters,

Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone,
which the swallow

Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the
sight of its fledglings ;

Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest of
the swallow !

Thus passed a few swift years, and they no longer
were children.

He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face
of the morning,

Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened
thought into action.

She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes
of a woman.

“Sunshine of St. Eulalie” was she called ; for
that was the sunshine

Which, as the farmers believed, would load their
orchards with apples ;
She, too, would bring to her husband's house de-
light and abundance,
Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces of
children.

II.

NOW had the season returned, when the
nights grow colder and longer,
And the retreating sun the sign of the
Scorpion enters.

Birds of passage sailed through the leaden air,
from the ice-bound,
Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical
islands.

Harvests were gathered in ; and wild with the
winds of September

Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old
with the angel.

All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.
Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded
their honey

Till the hives overflowed ; and the Indian hunters
asserted

Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur
of the foxes.

Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed
that beautiful season,

Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer
of All-Saints !

Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical
light ; and the landscape

Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of child-
hood.

Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless
heart of the ocean

Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in
harmony blended.

Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in
the farmyards,

Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing
of pigeons,

All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love,
and the great sun

Looked with the eye of love through the golden
vapours around him ;

While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet
and yellow,

Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering
tree of the forest

Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned
with mantles and jewels.

Now recommenced the reign of rest and affection
and stillness.

Day with its burden and heat had departed, and
twilight descending

Brought back the evening star to the sky, and the
herds to the homestead.

Pawing the ground they came, and resting their
necks on each other,

And with their nostrils distended inhaling the
freshness of evening.

Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful
heifer,

Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon
that waved from her collar,

Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human
affection.

Then came the shepherd back with his bleating
flocks from the sea-side,

Where was their favourite pasture. Behind them
followed the watch-dog,

Patient, full of importance, and grand in the
pride of his instinct,

Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and
superbly
Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the
stragglers ;
Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept ;
their protector,
When from the forest at night, through the starry
silence, the wolves howled
Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains
from the marshes,
Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its
odour.
Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their
manes and their fetlocks,
While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and
ponderous saddles,
Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with
tessels of crimson,
Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy
with blossoms.
Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded
their udders
Unto the milkmaid's hand ; whilst loud and in
regular cadence
Into the sounding pails the foaming streamlets
descended.

Lowling of cattle and peals of laughter were heard
in the farmyard,
Echoed back by the barns. Anon they sank into
stillness ;
Heavily closed, with a jarring sound, the valves
of the barn-doors,
Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season was
silent.

In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fire-place,
idly the farmer
Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how the
flames and the smoke-wreaths
Struggled together like foes in a burning city.
Behind him,
Nodding and mocking along the wall, with ges-
tures fantastic,
Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away
into darkness.
Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his
arm-chair
Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter
plates on the dresser
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of
armies the sunshine.

Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols
of Christmas,
Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers
before him
Sang in their Norm.an orchards and bright Bur-
gundian vineyards.
Close at her father's side was the gentle Evange-
line seated,
Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the
corner behind her.
Silent a while were its treadles, at rest was its
diligent shuttle,
While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like
the drone of a bagpipe,
Followed the old man's song, and united the
fragments together.
As in a church, when the chant of the choir at
intervals ceases,
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the
priest at the altar,
So, in each pause of the song, with measured
motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps heard,
and, suddenly lifted,

Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung
back on its hinges.

Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was
Basil the blacksmith,

And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who
was with him.

“Welcome!” the farmer exclaimed, as the foot-
steps paused on the threshold,

“Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come, take thy
place on the settle

Close by the chimney-side, which is always empty
without thee;

Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the
box of tobacco;

Never so much thyself art thou as when through
the curling

Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly and
jovial face gleams

Round and red as the harvest moon through the
mist of the marshes.”

Then, with a smile of content, thus answered Basil
the blacksmith,

Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the
fireside:—

“Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy jest
and thy ballad!

Ever in cheerfulest mood art thou, when others
are filled with
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin before
them.

Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst picked
up a horseshoe."

Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that Evan-
geline brought him,
And with a coal from the cinders had lighted, he
slowly continued :—

"Four days now are passed since the English
ships at their anchors

Ride in the Gaspereau's mouth, with their cannon
pointed against us.

What their design may be is unknown ; but all are
commanded

On the morrow to meet in the church, where his
Majesty's mandate

Will be proclaimed as law in the land. Alas ! in
the meantime

Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of the
people."

Then made answer the farmer :—" Perhaps some
friendlier purpose

Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps the
harvests in England

By the untimely rains or untimelier heat have
been lighted,
And from our bursting barns they would feed
their cattle and children."

"Not so thinketh the folk in the village," said,
warmly, the blacksmith,
Shaking his head, as in doubt; then, heaving a
sigh, he continued:—

"Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Séjour,
nor Port Royal.

Many already have fled to the forest, and lurk on
its outskirts,

Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious fate of
to-morrow.

Arms have been taken from us, and warlike
weapons of all kinds;

Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge and
the scythe of the mower."

Then with a pleasant smile made answer the jovial
farmer:—

"Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our flocks
and our cornfields,

Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged by the
ocean,

Than were our fathers in forts, besieged by the
enemy's cannon.

Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may no
shadow of sorrow
Fall on this house and hearth ; for this is the
night of the contract.
Built are the house and the barn. The merry
lads of the village
Strongly have built them and well ; and, breaking
the glebe round about them,
Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food
for a twelvemonth.
René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers
and inkhorn.
Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy
of our children?"
As apart by the window she stood, with her hand
in her lover's,
Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her
father had spoken,
And as they died on his lips the worthy notary
entered.

III.

BENT like a labouring oar, that toils in the
surf of the ocean,
Bent, but not broken, by age was the form
of the notary public ;

Shocks of yellow hairs, like the silken floss of the
maize, hung
Over his shoulders ; his forehead was high ; and
glasses with horn bows
Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wisdom
supernal.
Father of twenty children was he, and more than
a hundred
Children's children rode on his knee, and heard
his great watch tick.
Four long years in the time of the war had he
languished a captive,
Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend
of the English.
Now, though warier grown, without all guile or
suspicion,
Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and simple,
and childlike.
He was beloved by all, and most of all by the
children ;
For he told them tales of the Loup-garou in the
forest,
And of the goblin that came in the night to water
the horses,
And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a child
who unchristened

Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the
chambers of children ;
And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in the
stable,
And how the fever was cured by a spider shut up
in a nutshell,
And of the marvellous powers of four-leaved clover
and horseshoes,
With whatsoever else was writ in the lore of the
village.
Then up rose from his seat by the fireside Basil
the blacksmith,
Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly
extending his right hand,
"Father Leblanc," he exclaimed, "thou hast
heard the talk in the village,
And, perchance, canst tell us some news of these
ships and their errand."
Then with modest demeanour made answer the
notary public,
"Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet am
never the wiser ;
And what their errand may be I know not better
than others.
Yet am I not of those who imagine some evil
intention

Brings them here, for we are at peace ; and why
then molest us ?”

“God’s name !” shouted the hasty and somewhat
irascible blacksmith ;

“Must we in all things look for the how, and the
why, and the wherefore ?

Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of
the strongest !”

But, without heeding his warmth, continued the
notary public,—

“Man is unjust, but God is just ; and finally
justice

Triumphs ; and well I remember a story, that
often consoled me,

When as a captive I lay in the old French fort at
Port Royal.”

This was the old man’s favourite tale, and he loved
to repeat it

When his neighbours complained that any injustice
was done them.

“Once in an ancient city, whose name I no longer
remember,

Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue of
Justice

Stood in the public square, upholding the scales
in its left hand,

And in its right a sword, as an emblem that justice
presided
Over the laws of the land, and the hearts and
homes of the people.
Even the birds had built their nests in the scales
of the balance,
Having no fear of the sword that flashed in the
sunshine above them.
But in the course of time the laws of the land
were corrupted ;
Might took the place of right, and the weak were
oppressed, and the mighty
Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced in a
nobleman's palace
That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere long a
suspicion
Fell on an orphan girl who lived as maid in the
household.
She, after form of trial condemned to die on the
scaffold,
Patiently met her doom at the foot of the statue
of Justice.
As to her Father in heaven her innocent spirit
ascended,
Lo ! o'er the city a tempest rose ; and the bolts of
the thunder

Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in wrath
from its left hand
Down on the pavement below the clattering scales
of the balance,
And in the hollow thereof was found the nest of a
magpie,
Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls
was inwoven.”
Silenced, but not convinced, when the story was
ended, the blacksmith
Stood like a man who fain would speak, but
findeth no language ;
All his thoughts were congealed into lines on his
face, as the vapours
Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-panes in
the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on
the table,
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard with
home-brewed
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its strength in
the village of Grand-Pré ;
While from his pocket the notary drew his papers
and inkhorn,

Wrote with a steady hand the date and the age of
the parties,
Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of sheep
and in cattle.
Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and well
were completed,
And the great seal of the law was set like a sun
on the margin.
Then from his leathern pouch the farmer threw
on the table
Three times the old man's fee in solid pieces of
silver ;
And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and
the bridegroom,
Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank to their
welfare.
Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly bowed
and departed,
While in silence the others sat and mused by the
fireside,
Till Evangeline brought the draught-board out of
its corner.
Soon was the game begun. In friendly contention
the old men
Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful man-
œuvre,

Laughed when a man was crowned, or a breach
was made in the king-row.
Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of a
window's embrasure,
Sat the lovers, and whispered together, beholding
the moon rise
Over the pallid sea and the silvery mist of the
meadows.
Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of
heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of
the angels.

Thus passed the evening away. Anon the bell
from the belfry
Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and
straightway
Rose the guests and departed ; and silence reigned
in the household.
Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on
the door-step
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and filled it
with gladness.
Carefully then were covered the embers that
glowed on the hearthstone,

And on the oaken stairs resounded the tread of
the farmer.
Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evangeline
followed.
Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the
darkness,
Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of
the maiden.
Silent she passed through the hall, and entered
the door of her chamber.
Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of
white, and its clothes-press
Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were
carefully folded
Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of Evange-
line woven.
This was the precious dower she would bring to
her husband in marriage,
Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her
skill as a housewife.
Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mellow
and radiant moonlight
Streamed through the windows, and lighted the
room, till the heart of the maiden
Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous
tides of the ocean.

Ah ! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as
she stood with
Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of
her chamber !
Little she dreamed that below, among the trees of
the orchard,
Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of
her lamp and her shadow.
Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a
feeling of sadness
Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of clouds
in the moonlight
Flitted across the floor and darkened the room for
a moment.
And as she gazed from the window she saw
serenely the moon pass
Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star
follow her footsteps,
As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered
with Hagar !

IV.

PLEASANTLY rose next morn the sun on
the village of Grand-Pré.
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the
Basin of Minas,

Where the ships, with their wavering shadows,
were riding at anchor.
Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous labour
Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden gates of the morning.
Now from the country around, from the farms and the neighbouring hamlets,
Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian peasants.
Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from the young folk
Made the bright air brighter, as up from the numerous meadows,
Where no path could be seen but the track of wheels in the greensward,
Group after group appeared, and joined, or passed on the highway.
Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labour were silenced.
Thronged were the streets with people ; and noisy groups at the house-doors
Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gossiped together.
Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and feasted ;

For with this simple people, who lived like brothers
together,

All things were held in common, and what one
had was another's.

Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed
more abundant :

For Evangeline stood among the guests of her
father ;

Bright was her face with smiles, and words of
welcome and gladness

Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup
as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the
orchard,

Bending with golden fruit, was spread the feast of
betrothal.

There in the shade of the porch were the priest
and the notary seated ;

There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the
blacksmith.

Not far withdrawn from these, by the cider-press
and the beehives,

Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest of
hearts and of waistcoats.

Shadow and light from the leaves alternately
played on his snow-white
Hair, as it waved in the wind ; and the jolly face
of the fiddler
Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are
blown from the embers.
Gaily the old man sang to the vibrant sound of
his fiddle,
Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres, and *Le Carillon*
de Dunkerque,
And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the
music.
Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzying
dances
Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the
meadows ;
Old folk and young together, and children mingled
among them.
Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict's
daughter !
Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the
blacksmith !

So passed the morning away. And lo ! with a
summons sonorous

Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the
meadows a drum beat.

Thronged ere long was the church with men.

Without, in the churchyard,

Waited the women. They stood by the graves,
and hung on the head-stones

Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh
from the forest.

Then came the guard from the ships, and marching
proudly among them

Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dis-
sonant clangour

Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from
ceiling and casement,—

Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponderous
portal

Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited the will
of the soldiers.

Then uprose their commander, and spake from
the steps of the altar,

Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the
royal commission.

“You are convened this day,” he said, “by his
Majesty’s orders.

Clement and kind has he been ; but how you have
answered his kindness,

Let your own hearts reply ! To my natural make
and my temper
Painful the task is I do, which to you I know
must be grievous.
Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will of
our monarch ;
Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and
cattle of all kinds,
Forfeited be to the crown ; and that you yourselves
from this province
Be transported to other lands. God grant you
may dwell there
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable
people !
Prisoners now I declare you ; for such is his
Majesty's pleasure ! ”
As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice of
summer,
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of
the hailstones
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field and
shatters his windows,
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with
thatch from the house-roofs,
Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their
inclosures ;

So on the hearts of the people descended the
words of the speaker.
Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder,
and then rose
Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and
anger,
And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed
to the doorway.
Vain was the hope of escape ; and cries and fierce
imprecations
Rang through the house of prayer ; and high o'er
the heads of the others
Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil
the blacksmith,
As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the
billows.
Flushed was his face and distorted with passion ;
and wildly he shouted,—
“Down with the tyrants of England ! we never
have sworn them allegiance.
Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our
homes and our harvests !”
More he fain would have said, but the merciless
hand of a soldier
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him
down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry
contention,
Lo! the door of the chancel opened, and Father
Felician
Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the steps
of the altar.
Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he
awed into silence
All that clamorous throng; and thus he spake to
his people.
Deep were his tones and solemn; in accents
measured and mournful
Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarum, distinctly
the clock strikes.
"What is this that ye do, my children? what
madness has seized you?
Forty years of my life have I laboured among you,
and taught you,
Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one
another!
Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils and
prayers and privations?
Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love and
forgiveness?
This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and
would you profane it

Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing
with hatred ?
Lo ! where the crucified Christ from his cross is
gazing upon you !
See ! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and
holy compassion !
Hark ! how those lips still repeat the prayer, ' O
Father, forgive them !'
Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when the
wicked assail us,
Let us repeat it now, and say, O Father, forgive
them !"
Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the
hearts of his people
Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded that
passionate outbreak ;
And they repeated his prayer, and said, " O
Father, forgive them !"

Then came the evening service. The tapers
gleamed from the altar.
Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and
the people responded,
Not with their lips alone, but their hearts ; and
the Ave Maria

Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls,
with devotion translated,
Rose on the ardour of prayer, like Elijah ascend-
ing to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings
of ill, and on all sides
Wandered, wailing, from house to house, the
women and children.
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with
her right hand
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun,
that, descending,
Lighted the village street with mysterious splen-
dour, and roofed each
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and embla-
zoned its windows.
Long within had been spread the snow-white
cloth on the table ;
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey
fragrant with wild flowers ;
There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese
fresh brought from the dairy ;
And at the head of the board the great arm-chair
of the farmer.

Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's door, as
the sunset
Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the broad
ambrosial meadows.
Ah ! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had
fallen,
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance celestial
ascended,—
Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgive-
ness, and patience !
Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered into the
village,
Cheering with looks and words the disconsolate
hearts of the women,
As o'er the darkening fields with lingering steps
they departed,
Urged by their household cares, and the weary
feet of their children.
Down sank the great red sun, and in golden,
glimmering vapours
Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet
descending from Sinai.
Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus
sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the church
Evangeline lingered.
All was silent within ; and in vain at the door
and the windows
Stood she, and listened and looked, until, over-
come by emotion,
“Gabriel !” cried she aloud with tremulous voice ;
but no answer
Came from the graves of the dead, nor the
gloomier grave of the living.
Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless
house of her father.
Smouldred the fire on the hearth, on the board
stood the supper untasted,
Empty and drear was each room, and haunted
with phantoms of terror.
Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of
her chamber.
In the dead of the night she heard the whispering
rain fall
Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree
by the window.
Keenly the lightning flashed ; and the voice of
the echoing thunder
Told her that God was in heaven, and governed
the world he created !

Then she remembered the tale she had heard of
the justice of Heaven ;
Soothed was her troubled soul, and she peacefully
slumbered till morning.

V.

FOUR times the sun had risen and set ; and
now on the fifth day
Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping
maids of the farm-house.
Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful
procession,
Came from the neighbouring hamlets and farms
the Acadian women,
Driving in ponderous wains their household goods
to the sea-shore,
Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on
their dwellings,
Ere they were shut from sight by the winding
road and the woodland.
Close at their sides their children ran, and urged
on the oxen,
While in their little hands they clasped some
fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried ;
and there on the sea-beach
Piled in confusion lay the household goods of the
peasants.
All day long between the shore and the ships did
the boats ply ;
All day long the wains came labouring down from
the village.
Late in the afternoon, when the sun was near to
his setting,
Echoing far o'er the fields came the roll of drums
from the churchyard.
Thither the women and children thronged. On a
sudden the church-doors
Opened, and forth came the guard, and marching
in gloomy procession
Followed the long-imprisoned, but patient, Aca-
dian farmers.
Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from their
homes and their country,
Sing as they go, and in singing forget they are
weary and wayworn,
So with songs on their lips the Acadian peasants
descended
Down from the church to the shore, amid their
wives and their daughters.

Foremost the young men came ; and, raising
together their voices,
Sang they with tremulous lips a chant of the
Catholic Missions :—
“ Sacred heart of the Saviour ! O inexhaustible
fountain !
Fill our hearts this day with strength and sub-
mission and patience ! ”
Then the old men, as they marched, and the
women that stood by the way-side,
Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in the
sunshine above them
Mingled their notes therewith, like voices of
spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline waited
in silence,
Not overcome with grief, but strong in the hour
of affliction,—
Calmly and sadly waited, until the procession
approached her,
And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with
emotion.
Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly running to
meet him,

Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on his
shoulder, and whispered,—

“Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we love one
another,

Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mis-
chances may happen!”

Smiling she spake these words; then suddenly
paused, for her father

Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how changed
was his aspect!

Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire
from his eye, and his footstep

Heavier seemed with the weight of the weary
heart in his bosom.

But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck
and embraced him,

Speaking words of endearment where words of
comfort availed not.

Thus to the Gasperean's mouth moved on that
mournful procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and
stir of embarking.

Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the
confusion

Wives were torn from their husbands, and
mothers, too late, saw their children
Left on the land, extending their arms, with
wildest entreaties.
So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel
carried,
While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood
with her father.
Half the task was not done when the sun went
down, and the twilight
Deepened and darkened around ; and in haste the
refluent ocean
Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the
sand-beach
Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the
slippery sea-weed.
Farther back in the midst of the household goods
and the waggons,
Like to a gipsy camp, or a leaguer after a
battle,
All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels
near them,
Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian
farmers.
Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellow-
ing ocean,

Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles,
and leaving
Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of
the sailors.
Then, as the night descended, the herds returned
from their pastures ;
Sweet was the moist still air with the odour of
milk from their udders ;
Lowing they waited, and long, at the well-known
bars of the farmyard,—
Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the
hand of the milkmaid.
Silence reigned in the streets ; from the church no
Angelus sounded,
Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no
lights from the windows.

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires
had been kindled,
Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from
wrecks in the tempest.
Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces
were gathered,
Voices of women were heard, and of men, and
the crying of children.

Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth
in his parish,
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing
and cheering,
Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate
sea-shore.
Thus he approached the place where Evangeline
sat with her father,
And in the flickering light beheld the face of the
old man,
Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either
thought or emotion,
E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands
have been taken.
Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses
to cheer him,
Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not, he
looked not, he spake not,
But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flick-
ering fire-light.
“*Benedicite!*” murmured the priest, in tones of
compassion.
More he fain would have said, but his heart was
full, and his accents
Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a
child on a threshold,

Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful
presence of sorrow.
Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head
of the maiden,
Raising his eyes, full of tears, to the silent stars
that above them
Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs
and sorrows of mortals.
Then sat he down at her side, and they wept
together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in
autumn the blood-red
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o'er
the horizon
Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon moun-
tain and meadow,
Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge
shadows together.
Broader and ever broader it gleamed on the roofs
of the village,
Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and the ships
that lay in the roadstead.
Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of
flame were

Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like
the quivering hands of a martyr.
Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burn-
ing thatch, and, uplifting,
Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from
a hundred house-tops
Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame
intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd on the
shore and on shipboard.
Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in
their anguish,
“We shall behold no more our homes in the
village of Grand-Pré !”
Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the
farmyards,
Thinking the day had dawned ; and anon the
lowing of cattle
Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of
dogs interrupted.
Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the
sleeping encampments
Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt the
Nebraska,

When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with
the speed of the whirlwind,
Or the loud-bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to
the river.

Such was the sound that arose on the night, as
the herds and the horses
Broke through their folds and fences, and madly
rushed o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless, the
priest and the maiden
Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and
widened before them ;
And as they turned at length to speak to their
silent companion,
Lo ! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched
abroad on the sea-shore
Motionless lay his form, from which the soul had
departed.
Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and
the maiden
Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud in her
terror.
Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head
on his bosom.

Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivious
slumber ;
And when she woke from the trance; she beheld
a multitude near her.
Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully
gazing upon her ;
Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest
compassion.
Still the blaze of the burning village illumined the
landscape,
Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the
faces around her,
And like the day of doom it seemed to her waver-
ing senses.
Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the
people, —
“ Let us bury him here by the sea. When a happier
season
Brings us again to our homes from the unknown
land of our exile,
Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the
churchyard.”
Such were the words of the priest. And there in
haste by the sea-side,
Having the glare of the burning village for funeral
torches,

But without bell or book, they buried the farmer
of Grand-Pré.

And as the voice of the priest repeated the service
of sorrow,

Lo ! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a
vast congregation,

Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar
with the dirges.

'Twas the returning tide, that afar from the waste
of the ocean,

With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and
hurrying landward.


Then recommenced once more the stir and noise
of embarking ;

And with the ebb of that tide the ships sailed out
of the harbour,

Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and
the village in ruins.

PART THE SECOND.

I.

 ANY a weary year had passed since the
burning of Grand-Pré,
When on the falling tide the freighted
vessels departed,
Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into
exile,
Exile without an end, and without an example in
story.
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians
landed ;
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow, when the
wind from the north-east
Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the
banks of Newfoundland.
Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered from
city to city,
From the cold lakes of the North to su'try South-
ern savannas,—
From the bleak shores of the sea to the lands
where the Father of Waters

Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags them down
to the ocean,
Deep in their sands to bury the scattered bones of
the mammoth.
Friends they sought and homes ; and many, de-
spairing, heart-broken,
Asked of the earth but a grave, and no longer a
friend nor a fireside.
Written their history stands on tablets of stone in
the churchyards.
Long among them was seen a maiden who waited
and wandered,
Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently suffering
all things.
Fair was she and young ; but, alas ! before her
extended,
Dreary and vast and silent, the desert of life, with
its pathway
Marked by the graves of those who had sorrowed
and suffered before her,
Passions long extinguished, and hopes long dead
and abandoned,
As the emigrant's way o'er the Western desert is
marked by
Camp-fires long consumed, and bones that bleach
in the sunshine

Something there was in her life incomplete, im-
perfect, unfinished ;
As if a morning of June, with all its music and
sunshine,
Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading, slowly
descended
Into the East again, from whence it late had
arisen.
Sometimes she lingered in towns, till, urged by the
fever within her,
Urged by a restless longing, the hunger and thirst
of the spirit,
She would commence again her endless search and
endeavour ;
Sometimes in churchyards strayed, and gazed on
the crosses and tombstones,
Sat by some nameless grave, and thought that
perhaps in its bosom
He was already at rest, and she longed to slumber
beside him.
Sometimes a rumour, a hearsay, an inarticulate
whisper,
Came with its airy hand to point and beckon her
forward.
Sometimes she spake with those who had seen her
beloved and known him,

But it was long ago, in some far-off place or forgotten.

“Gabriel Lajeunesse !” said others ; “O, yes ! we have seen him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and both have gone to the prairies ;

Coueurs-des-Bois are they, and famous hunters and trappers.”

“Gabriel Lajeunesse !” said others ; “O, yes ! we have seen him.

He is a *Voyageur* in the lowlands of Louisiana.”

Then would they say, —“Dear child ! why dream and wait for him longer ?

Are there not other youths as fair as Gabriel ? others

Who have hearts as tender and true, and spirits as loyal ?

Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary’s son, who has loved thee

Many a tedious year ; come, give him thy hand and be happy !

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St. Catherine’s tresses.”

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely but sadly, —“I cannot !

Whither my heart has gone, there follows my hand,
and not elsewhere.
For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and
illuminates the pathway,
Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden
in darkness."
And thereupon the priest, her friend and father-
confessor,
Said, with a smile, — "O daughter! thy God thus
speaketh within thee!
Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was
wasted;
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters,
returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them
full of refreshment;
That which the fountain sends forth returns again
to the fountain.
Patience; accomplish thy labour; accomplish thy
work of affection!
Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient
endurance is godlike,
Therefore accomplish thy labour of love, till the
heart is made godlike,
Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered
more worthy of heaven!"

Cheered by the good man's words, Evangline
laboured and waited.
Still in her heart she heard the funeral dirge of
the ocean,
But with its sound there was mingled a voice that
whispered, "Despair not!"
Thus did that poor soul wander in want and
cheerless discomfort,
Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and thorns
of existence.
Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the wanderer's
footsteps;—
Not through each devious path, each changeful
year of existence;
But as a traveller follows a streamlet's course
through the valley:
Far from its margin at times, and seeing the gleam
of its water
Here and there, in some open space, and at inter-
vals only;
Then drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan
glooms that conceal it,
Though he behold it not, he can hear its con-
tinuous murmur;
Happy, at length, if he find the spot where it
reaches an outlet.

II.

IT was the month of May. Far down the
Beautiful River,
Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of
the Wabash,
Into the golden stream of the broad and swift
Mississippi,
Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed by
Acadian boatmen.
It was a band of exiles : a raft, as it were, from
the shipwrecked
Nation, scattered along the coast, now floating
together,
Bound by the bonds of a common belief and a
common misfortune ;
Men and women and children, who, guided by
hope or by hearsay,
Sought for their kith and their kin among the few-
acred farmers
On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of fair
Opelousas.

With them Evangeline went, and her guide, the
Father Felician.
Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wilderness
sombre with forests,
Day after day they glided adown the turbulent
river ;
Night after night, by their blazing fires, encamped
on its borders.
Now through rushing chutes, among green islands,
where plume-like
Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests, they
swept with the current,
Then emerged into broad lagoons, where silvery
sand-bars
Lay in the stream, and along the wimpling
waves of their margin,
Shining with snow-white plumes, large flocks of
pelicans waded.
Level the landscape grew, and along the shores of
the river,
Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of luxuriant
gardens,
Stood the houses of planters, with negro-cabins
and dovecots.
They were approaching the region where reigns
perpetual summer,

Where through the Golden Coast, and groves of
orange and citron,
Sweeps with majestic curve the river away to the
eastward.
They, too, swerved from their course ; and, enter-
ing the Bayou of Plaquemine,
Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious
waters,
Which, like a network of steel, extended in every
direction.
Over their heads the towering and tenebrous
boughs of the cypress
Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses in mid
air
Waved like banners that hang on the walls of
ancient cathedrals.
Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken, save
by the herons
Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees returning
at sunset,
Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with
demoniac laughter.
Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and
gleamed on the water,
Gleamed on the columns of cypress and cedar
sustaining the arches,

Down through whose broken vaults it fell as
through chinks in a ruin.
Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were all
things around them ;
And o'er their spirits there came a feeling of
wonder and sadness, —
Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that cannot
be compassed.
As at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of
the prairies,
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrink-
ing mimosa,
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings
of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of
doom has attained it.
But Evangeline's heart was sustained by a vision,
that faintly
Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her on
through the moonlight.
It was the thought of her brain that assumed the
shape of a phantom.
Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel
wandered before her,
And every stroke of the oar now brought him
nearer and nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the boat, rose
one of the oarsmen,
And, as a signal sound, if others like them per-
adventure
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight streams,
blew a blast on his bugle.
Wild through the dark colonnades and corridors
leafy the blast rang,
Breaking the seal of silence, and giving tongues
to the forest.
Soundless above them the banners of moss just
stirred to the music.
Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in the
distance,
Over the watery floor, and beneath the reverberant
branches ;
But not a voice replied ; no answer came from the
darkness ;
And when the echoes had ceased, like a sense of
pain was the silence.
Then Evangeline slept ; but the boatmen rowed
through the midnight,
Silent at times, then singing familiar Canadian
boat-songs,
Such as they sang of old on their own Acadian
rivers.

And through the night were heard the mysterious
sounds of the desert,
Far off, indistinct, as of wave or wind in the forest,
Mixed with the whoop of the crane and the roar
of the grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged from those
shades ; and before them
Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atchafala-
laya.
Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight
undulations
Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent in
beauty, the lotus
Lifted her golden crown above the heads of the
boatmen.
Faint was the air with the odorous breath of
magnolia blossoms,
And with the heat of noon ; and numberless
sylvan islands,
Fragrant and thickly embowered with blossoming
hedges of roses,
Near to whose shores they glided along, invited
to slumber.
Soon by the fairest of these their weary oars were
suspended.

Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that grew
by the margin,
Safely their boat was moored ; and scattered
about on the greensward,
Tired with their midnight toil, the weary travellers
slumbered.
Over them vast and high extended the cope of a
cedar.
Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower
and the grape-vine
Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of
Jacob,
On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending,
descending,
Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted from
blossom to blossom.
Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she
slumbered beneath it.
Filled was her heart with love, and the dawn of
an opening heaven
Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of regions
celestial.

Nearer and ever nearer, among the numberless
islands,

Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away o'er the
water,
Urged on its course by the sinewy arms of hunters
and trappers.
Northward its prow was turned, to the land of the
bison and beaver.
At the helm sat a youth, with countenance thought-
ful and careworn.
Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his
brow, and a sadness
Somewhat beyond his years on his face was
legibly written.
Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting, un-
happy and restless,
Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of self and
of sorrow.
Swiftly they glided along, close under the ice of
the island,
But by the opposite bank, and behind a screen of
palmettos,
So that they saw not the boat, where it lay con-
cealed in the willows,
And undisturbed by the dash of their oars, and
unseen, were the sleepers ;
Angel of God was there none to awaken the
slumbering maiden.

Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of a
cloud on the prairie.
After the sound of their oars on the tholes had
died in the distance,
As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and
the maiden
Said with a sigh to the friendly priest,—“O
Father Felician !
Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel
wanders.
Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague supersti-
tion ?
Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to
my spirit ?”
Then, with a blush, she added,—“Alas for my
credulous fancy !
Unto ears like thine such words as these have no
meaning.”
But made answer the reverend man, and he smiled
as he answered,—
“Daughter, thy words are not idle ; nor are they
to me without meaning.
Feeling is deep and still ; and the word that floats
on the surface
Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where the
anchor is hidden.

Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what the
world calls illusions.

Gabriel truly is near thee ; for not far away to the
southward,

On the banks of the Têche, are the towns of St.
Maur and St. Martin.

There the long-wandering bride shall be given
again to her bridegroom,

There the long-absent pastor regain his flock and
his sheepfold.

Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests
of fruit-trees ;

Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest
of heavens

Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls
of the forest.

They who dwell there have named it the Eden of
Louisiana."

And with these words of cheer they arose and
continued their journey.

Softly the evening came. The sun from the
western horizon

Like a magician extended his golden wand o'er the
landscape ;

Twinkling vapours arose ; and sky and water and
forest
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and
mingled together.
Hanging between two skies, a cloud with edges
of silver,
Floated the boat, with its dripping oars, on the
motionless water.
Filled was Evangeline's heart with inexpressible
sweetness.
Touched by the magic spell, the sacred fountains
of feeling
Glowed with the light of love, as the skies and
waters around her.
Then from a neighbouring thicket the mocking-
bird, wildest of singers,
Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er
the water,
Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious
music,
That the whole air and the woods and the waves
seemed silent to listen.
Plaintive at first were the tones and sad ; then
soaring to madness
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of
frenzied Bacchantes.

Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful, low
lamentation ;
Till, having gathered them all, he flung them
abroad in derision,
As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through
the tree-tops
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower
on the branches.
With such a prelude as this, and hearts that
throbbed with emotion,
Slowly they entered the Têche, where it flows
through the green Opelousas,
And through the amber air, above the crest of the
woodland,
Saw the column of smoke that arose from a neigh-
bouring dwelling ; —
Sounds of a horn they heard, and the distant
lowing of cattle.

III.

NEAR to the bank of the river, o'er-
shadowed by oaks, from whose branches
Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic
mistletoe flaunted

Such as the Druids cut down with golden hatchets
at Yule-tide,
Stood, secluded and still, the house of the herds-
man. A garden
Girded it round about with a belt of luxuriant
blossoms,
Filling the air with fragrance. The house itself
was of timbers
Hewn from the cypress-tree, and carefully fitted
together.
Large and low was the roof; and on slender
columns supported,
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad and spa-
cious veranda,
Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee, extended
around it.
At each end of the house, amid the flowers of the
garden,
Stationed the dove-cots were, as love's perpetual
symbol,
Scenes of endless wooing, and endless contentions
of rivals.
Silence reigned o'er the place. The line of shadow
and sunshine
Ran near the tops of the trees; but the house
itself was in shadow.

And from its chimney-top, ascending and slowly
expanding
Into the evening air, a thin blue column of smoke
rose.
In the rear of the house, from the garden gate, ran
a pathway
Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of
the limitless prairie,
Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly
descending
Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy
canvas
Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless
calm in the tropics,
Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cordage of
grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf
of the prairie,
Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and
stirrups,
Sat a herdsman arrayed in gaiters and doublet of
deerskin.
Broad and brown was the face that from under the
Spanish sombrero

Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the lordly look
of its master.
Round about him were numberless herds of kine,
that were grazing
Quietly in the meadows, and breathing the verdant
freshness
That uprose from the river, and spread itself over
the landscape.
Slowly lifting the horn that hung at his side, and
expanding
Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew a blast, that
resounded
Wildly and sweet and far, through the still damp
air of the evening.
Suddenly out of the grass the long white horns of
the cattle
Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse currents of
ocean.
Silent a moment they gazed, then bellowing rushed
o'er the prairie,
And the whole mass became a cloud, a shade in
the distance.
Then, as the herdsman turned to the house, through
the gate of the garden
Saw he the forms of the priest and the maiden
advancing to meet him.

Suddenly down from his horse he sprang in amazement, and forward
Rushed with extended arms and exclamations of wonder ;
When they beheld his face, they recognised Basil the Blacksmith.
Hearty his welcome was, as he led his guests to the garden.
There in an arbour of roses, with endless question and answer
Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed their friendly embraces,
Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting silent and thoughtful.
Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not ; and now dark doubts and misgivings
Stole o'er the maiden's heart ; and Basil, somewhat embarrassed,
Broke the silence and said,—“ If you came by the Atchafalaya,
How have you nowhere encountered my Gabriel's boat on the bayous ? ”
Over Evangeline's face at the words of Basil a shade passed.
Tears came into her eyes, and she said, with a tremulous accent,—

"Gone? is Gabriel gone?" and, concealing her
face on his shoulder,
All her o'erburdened heart gave way, and she
wept and lamented.
Then the good Basil said,—and his voice grew
blithe as he said it,—
"Be of good cheer, my child; it is only to-day
he departed.
Foolish boy! he has left me alone with my herds
and my horses.
Moody and restless grown, and tried and troubled,
his spirit
Could no longer endure the calm of this quiet
existence.
Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and sorrowful
ever,
Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and his
troubles,
He at length had become so tedious to men and
to maidens,
Tedious even to me, that at length I bethought
me, and sent him
Unto the town of Adayes to trade for mules with
the Spaniards.
Thence he will follow the Indian trails to the
Ozark Mountains,

Hunting for furs in the forests, on rivers trapping
the beaver.

Therefore be of good cheer; we will follow the
fugitive lover;

He is not far on his way, and the Fates and the
streams are against him.

Up and away to-morrow, and through the red dew
of the morning

We will follow him fast, and bring him back to
his prison."

Then glad voices were heard, and up from the
banks of the river,

Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came Michael
the fiddler.

Long under Basil's roof had he lived like a god on
Olympus,

Having no other care than dispensing music to
mortals.

Far renowned was he for his silver locks and his
fiddle.

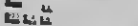
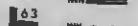
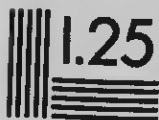
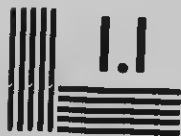
"Long live Michael," they cried, "our brave
Acadian minstrel!"

As they bore him aloft in triumphal procession;
and straightway



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Father Felician advanced with Evangeline, greet-
ing the old man
Kindly and oft, and recalling the past, while
Basil, enraptured,
Hailed with hilarious joy his old companions and
gossips,
Laughing loud and long, and embracing mothers
and daughters.
Much they marvelled to see the wealth of the ci-
devant blacksmith,
All his domains and his herds, and his patriarchal
demeanour ;
Much they marvelled to hear his tales of the soil
and the climate,
And of the prairies, whose numberless herds were
his who would take them ;
Each one thought in his heart, that he, too, would
go and do likewise.
Thus they ascended the steps, and crossing the
airy veranda,
Entered the hall of the house, where already the
supper of Basil
Waited his late return ; and they rested and feasted
together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden darkness
 descended.

All was silent without, and, illuming the landscape
 with silver,

Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad stars ;
 but within doors,

Brighter than these, shone the faces of friends in
 the glimmering lamplight.

Then from his station aloft, at the head of the
 table, the herdsman

Poured forth his heart and his wine together in
 endless profusion.

Lighting his pipe, that was filled with sweet
 Natchitoches tobacco,

Thus he spake to his guests, who listened, and
 smiled as they listened :—

“Welcome once more, my friends, who so long
 have been friendless and homeless,

Welcome once more to a home, that is better per-
 chance than the old one !

Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like
 the rivers ;

Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the
 farmer.

Smoothly the p'oughshare runs through the soil
 as a keel through the water.

All the year round the orange-groves are in blossom ; and grass grows More in a single night than a whole Canadian summer.

Here, too, numberless herds run wild and un-claimed in the prairies ;

Here, too, lands may be had for the asking, and forests of timber

With a few blows of the axe are hewn and framed into houses.

After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow with harvests,

No King George of England shall drive you away from your homesteads,

Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your farms and your cattle."

Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful cloud from his nostrils,

And his huge, brawny hand came thundering down on the table,

So that the guests all started ; and Father Felician, astounded,

Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff half-way to his nostrils.

But the brave Basil resumed, and his words were milder and gayer :—

“ Only beware of the fever, my friends, beware of
the fever !

For it is not like that of our cold Acadian
climate,

Cured by wearing a spider hung round one's neck
in a nutshell !”

Then there were voices heard at the door, and
footsteps approaching

Sounded upon the stairs and the floor of the breezy
veranda.

It was the neighbouring Creoles and small Aca-
dian planters,

Who had been summoned all to the house of
Basil the Herdsman.

Merry the meeting was of ancient comrades and
neighbours :

Friend clasped friend in his arms ; and they who
before were as strangers,

Meeting in exile, became straightway as friends to
each other,

Drawn by the gentle bond of a common country
together.

But in the neighbouring hall a strain of music,
proceeding

From the accordant strings of Michael's melodious
fiddle,

Broke up all further speech. Away, like children
delighted,
All things forgotten beside, they gave themselves
to the maddening
Whirl of the dizzy dance, as it swept and swayed
to the music,
Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the rush of
fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the hall, the
prie t and the herdsman
Sat, conversing together of past and present and
future ;
While Evangeline stood like one entranced, for
within her
Olden memories rose, and loud in the midst of the
music -
Heard she the sound of the sea, and an irrepres-
sible sadness
Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole forth
into the garden.
Beautiful was the night. Behind the black wall
of the forest,
Tipping its summit with silver, arose the moon.
On the river

Fell here and there through the branches a tremu-
lous gleam of the moonlight,
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a darkened and
devious spirit.
Nearer and round about her, the manifold flowers
of the garden
Poured out their souls in odours, that were their
prayers and confessions
Unto the night, as it went its way, like a silent
Carthusian.
Fuller of fragrance than they, and as heavy with
shadows and night-dews,
Hung the heart of the maiden. The calm and the
magical moonlight
Seemed to inundate her soul with indefinable
longings,
As, through the garden gate, beneath the brown
shade of the oak-trees,
Passed she along the path to the edge of the
measureless prairie.
Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon it, and fire-
flies
Gleaming and floating away in mingled and in-
finite numbers.
Over her head the stars, the thoughts of God in
the heavens,

Shone on the eyes of man, who had ceased to
marvel and worship,
Save when a blazing comet was seen on the walls
of that temple,
As if a hand had appeared and written upon them,
"Upharsin."
And the soul of the maiden, between the stars and
the fire-flies,
Wandered alone, and she cried,—“O Gabriel!
O my beloved!
Art thou so near unto me, and yet I cannot
behold thee!
Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy voice does
not reach me?
Ah! how often thy feet have trod this path to the
prairie!
Ah! how often thine eyes have looked on the
woodlands around me!
Ah! how often beneath this oak, returning from
labour,
Thou hast lain down to rest, and to dream of me
in thy slumbers!
When shall these eyes behold, these arms be folded
about thee?”
Loud and sudden and near the note of a whip-
poorwill sounded

Like a flute in the woods ; and anon, through the
neighbouring thickets,
Farther and farther away it floated and dropped
into silence.

“Patience !” whispered the oaks from oracular
caverns of darkness ;
And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh responded,
“To-morrow !”

Bright rose the sun next day ; and all the
flowers of the garden
Bathed his shining feet with their tears, and
anointed his tresses
With the delicious balm that they bore in their
vases of crystal.
“Farewell !” said the priest, as he stood at the
shadowy threshold ;
“See that you bring us the Prodigal Son from his
fasting and famine,
And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept when the
bridegroom was coming.”
“Farewell !” answered the maiden, and, smiling,
with Basil descended
Down to the river’s brink, where the boatmen
already were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morning, and
sunshine, and gladness,
Swiftly they followed the flight of him who was
speeding before them,
Blown by the blast of fate like a dead leaf over
the desert.
Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the day that
succeeded,
Found they trace of his course, in lake, or forest,
or river ;
Nor, after many days, had they found him ; but
vague and uncertain
Rumours alone were their guides through a wild
and desolate country ;
Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town of
Adayes,
Weary and worn, they alighted, and learned from
the garrulous landlord,
That on the day before, with horses, and guides,
and companions,
Gabriel left the village, and took the road of the
prairies.

IV.

FAR in the West there lies a desert land,
where the mountains
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty
and luminous summits.

Down from their jagged, deep ravines, where the
gorge, like a gateway,

Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the emi-
grant's waggon,

Westward the Oregon flows, and the Walleway
and the Owyhee,

Eastward, with devious course, among the Wind-
river Mountains,

Through the Sweet-water Valley precipitate leaps
the Nebraska ;

And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the
Spanish sierras,

Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by the
wind of the desert,

Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound, descend
to the ocean,

Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and
solemn vibrations.

Spreading between these streams are the wondrous,
beautiful prairies.
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and
sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple
amorphas.
Over them wander the buffalo herds, and the elk
and the roebuck ;
Over them wander the wolves, and herds of rider-
less horses ;
Fires that Llast and blight, and winds that are
weary with travel ;
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael's
children,
Staining the desert with blood ; and above their
terrible war-trails
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the
vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered
in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the
heavens.
Here and there rise smokes from the camps of
these savage marauders ;
Here and there rise groves from the margins of
swift-running rivers ;

And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk
of the desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots by
the brook-side ;
And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline
heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above
them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base of the
Ozark Mountains,
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and trappers
behind him.
Day after day, with their Indian guides, the
maiden and Basil
Followed his flying steps, and thought each day
to o'ertake him.
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the
smoke of his camp-fire
Rise in the morning air from the distant plain ;
but at nightfall,
When they had reached the place, they found only
embers and ashes.

And, though their hearts were sad at times and
their bodies were weary,
Hoj still guided them on, as the magic Fata
Morgana
Showed them her lakes of light, that retreated and
vanished before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire, there
silently entered
Into the little camp an Indian woman, whose
features
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience as great
as her sorrow.
She was a Shawnee woman returning home to her
people,
From the far-off hunting-grounds of the cruel
Camanches,
Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-des-
Bois, had been murdered.
Touched were their hearts at her story, and
warmest and friendliest welcome
Gave they, with words of cheer, and she sat and
feasted among them
On the buffalo meat and the venison cooked on
the embers.

But when their meal was done, and Basil and all
his companions,
Worn with the long day's march and the chase of
the deer and the bison,
Stretched themselves on the ground, and slept
where the quivering fire-light
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and their forms
wrapped up in their blankets,
Then at the door of Evangeline's tent she sat and
repeated
Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the charm of
her Indian accent,
All the tale of her love, with its pleasures, and
pains, and reverses.
Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and to know
that another
Hapless heart like her own had loved and had
been disappointed.
Moved to the depths of her soul by pity and
woman's compassion,
Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who had
suffered was near her,
She in turn related her love and all its dis-
asters.
Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and when she
had ended

Still was mute ; but at length, as if a mysterious
horror
Passed through her brain, she spake, and repeated
the tale of the Mowis ;
Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won and
wedded a maiden,
But, when the morning came, arose and passed
from the wigwam,
Fading and melting away and dissolving into the
sun-hine,
Till she beheld him no more, though she followed
far into the forest.
Then, in those sweet, low tones, that seemed like
a weird incantation,
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinar, who was
wooed by a phantom,
That, through the pines o'er her father's lodge, in
the hush of the twilight,
Breathed like the evening wind, and whispered
love to the maiden.
Till she followed his green and waving plume
through the forest,
And never more returned, nor was seen again by
her people.
Silent with wonder and strange surprise, Evan-
geline listened

To the soft flow of her magical words, till the
region around her
Seemed like enchanted ground, and her swarthy
guest the enchantress.
Slowly over the tops of the Ozark Mountains the
moon rose,
Lighting the little tent, and with a mysterious
splendour
Touching the sombre leaves, and embracing and
filling the woodland.
With a delicious sound the brook rushed by, and
the branches
Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely audible
whispers.
Filled with the thoughts of love was Evangeline's
heart, but a secret,
Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefinite
terror,
As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into the nest
of the swallow.
It was no earthly fear. A breath from the region
of spirits
Seemed to float in the air of night ; and she felt
for a moment
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was pursu-
ing a phantom.

And with this thought she slept, and the fear and
the phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march was re-
sumed ; and the Shawnee
Said, as they journeyed along, — “ On the western
slope of these mountains
Dwells in his little village the Black Robe chief of
the Mission.
Much he teaches the people, and tells them of
Mary and Jesus ;
Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and weep with
pain, as they hear him.”
Then, with a sudden and secret emotion, Evange-
line answered, —
“ Let us go to the Mission, for there good tidings
await us ! ”
Thither they turned their steeds ; and behind a
spur of the mountains,
Just as the sun went down, they heard a murmur
of voices,
And in a meadow green and broad, by the bank
of a river,
Saw the tents of the Christians, the tents of the
Jesuit Mission.

Under a towering oak, that stood in the midst of
the village,
Knelt the Black Robe chief with his children.
A crucifix fastened
High on the trunk of the tree, and overshadowed
by grape-vines,
Looked with its agonized face on the multitude
kneeling beneath it.
This was their rural chapel. Aloft, through the
intricate arches
Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of their
vespers,
Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus and sighs
of the branches.
Silent, with heads uncovered, the travellers,
nearer approaching,
Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined in the
evening devotions.
But when the service was done, and the bene-
diction had fallen
Forth from the hands of the priest, like seed
from the hands of the sower,
Slowly the reverend man advanced to the
strangers, and bade them
Welcome; and when they replied, he smiled with
benignant expression.

Hearing the homelike sounds of his mother-
tongue in the forest,
And with words of kindness conducted them into
his wigwam.

There upon mats and skins they reposed, and on
cakes of the maize-ear
Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-
gourd of the teacher.

Soon was their story told; and the priest with
solemnity answered:—

“Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel,
seated

On this mat by my side, where now the maiden
reposes,

Told me this same sad tale; then arose and con-
tinued his journey!”

Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake
with an accent of kindness;

But on Evangeline's heart fell his words as in
winter the snow-flakes

Fall into some lone nest from which the birds
have departed.

“Far to the North he has gone,” continued the
priest; “but in autumn,

When the chase is done, will return again to the
Mission.”

Then Evangeline said, and her voice was meek
and submissive,—

“Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad
and afflicted.”

So seemed it wise and well unto all ; and betimes
on the morrow,

Mounting his Mexican steed, with his Indian
guides and companions,

Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed
at the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded each
other,—

Days and weeks and months ; and the fields of
maize that were springing

Green from the ground when a stranger she came,
now waving above her,

Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves interlacing,
and forming

Cloisters for mendicant crows and granaries pil-
laged by squirrels.

Then in the golden weather the maize was husked,
and the maidens

Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that betokened
a lover,

But at the crooked laughed, and called it a thief
in the corn-field.

Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline brought not
her lover.

“Patience!” the priest would say; “have faith,
and thy prayer will be answered!

Look at this delicate plant that lifts its head from
the meadow,

See how its leaves all point to the north, as true
as the magnet;

It is the compass-flower, that the finger of God
has suspended

Here on its fragile stalk, to direct the traveller’s
journey

Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless waste of the
desert.

Such in the soul of man is faith. The blossoms
of passion,

Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and fuller
of fragrance,

But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and their
odour is deadly.

Only this humble plant can guide us here, and
hereafter

Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are wet with
the dews of nepenthe.”

So came the autumn, and passed, and the winter,
—yet Gabriel came not ;
Blossomed the opening spring, and the notes of
the robin and blue-bird
Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood, yet
Gabriel came not.
But on the breath of the summer winds a rumour
was wafted
Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odour of
blossom.
Far to the north and east, it said, in the Michigan
forests,
Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the Saginaw
river.
And, with returning guides, that sought the lakes
of St. Lawrence,
Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went from the
Mission.
When over weary ways, by long and perilous
marches,
She had attained at length the depths of the
Michigan forests,
Found she the hunter's lodge deserted and fallen
to ruin

Thus did the long sad years glide on, and in
seasons and places
Divers and distant far was seen the wandering
maiden ;—
Now in the tents of grace of the meek Moravian
Missions,
Now in the noisy camps and the battle-fields of
the army,
Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and populous
cities.
Like a phantom she came, and passed away un-
remembered.
Fair was she and young, when in hope began the
long journey ;
Faded was she and old, when in disappointment
it ended.
Each succeeding year stole something away from
her beauty,
Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom
and the shadow.
Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of
gray o'er her forehead,
Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly
horizon,
As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the
morning.

V.

IN that delightful land which is washed by
the Delaware's waters,
Guarding in sylvan shades the name of Penn
the apostle,
Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream the
city he founded.
There all the air is balm, and the peach is the
emblem of beauty,
And the streets still reëcho the names of the trees
of the forest,
As if they fain would appease the Dryads whose
haunts they molested.
There from the troubled sea had Evangeline
landed, an exile,
Finding among the children of Penn a home and
a country.
There old René Leblanc had died ; and when he
departed,
Saw at his side only one of all his hundred
descendants.
Something at least there was in the friendly streets
of the city,

Something that spake to her heart, and made her
no longer a stranger ;
And her ear was pleased with the Thee and Thou
of the Quakers,
For it recalled the past, the old Acadian
country,
Where all men were equal, and all were brothers
and sisters.
So, when the fruitless search, the disappointed
endeavour,
Ended, to recommence no more upon earth, un-
complaining,
Thither, as leaves to the light, were turned her
thoughts and her footsteps.
As from a mountain's top the rainy mists of the
morning
Roll away, and afar we behold the landscape
below us,
Sun-illuminated, with shining rivers and cities and
hamlets,
So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the
world far below her
Dark no longer, but all illumined with love ; and
the pathway
Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth and
fair in the distance.

Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her heart was
his image,
Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last
she beheld him,
Only more beautiful made by his deathlike silence
and absence.
Into her thoughts of him time entered not, for it
was not.
Over him years had no power; he was not
changed, but transfigured;
He had become to her heart as one who is dead,
and not absent;
Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to
others,
This was the lesson a life of trial and sorrow had
taught her.
So was her love diffused, but, like to some odorous
spices,
Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air
with aroma.
Other hope had she none, nor wish in life, but to
follow
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred feet of her
Saviour.
Thus many years she lived as a Sister of Mercy;
frequenting

Lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded lanes
of the city,
Where distress and want concealed themselves
from the sunlight,
Where disease and sorrow in garrets languished
neglected.
Night after night, when the world was asleep, as
the watchman repeated
Loud, through the gusty streets, that all was well
in the city,
High at some lonely window he saw the light of
her taper.
Day after day, in the gray of the dawn, as slow
through the suburbs
Plodded the German farmer, with flowers and
fruits for the market,
Met he that meek, pale face, returning home from
its watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence fell on
the city,
Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly by flocks
of wild pigeons,
Darkening the sun in their flight, with nought in
their craws but an acorn.

And, as the tides of the sea arise in the month of
September,
Flooding some silver stream, till it spreads to a
lake in the meadow,
So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing its natural
margin,
Spread to a brackish lake, the silver stream of
existence.
Wealth had no power to bribe, nor beauty to
charm, the oppressor ;
But all perished alike beneath the scourge of his
anger ;—
Only, alas ! the poor, who had neither friends
nor attendants,
Crept away to die in the almshouse, home of the
homeless.
Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst of
meadows and woodlands ;—
Now the city surrounds it ; but still, with its gate-
way and wicket
Meek, in the midst of splendour, its humble walls
seem to echo
Softly the words of the Lord :—“ The poor ye
always have with you.”
Thither, by night and by day, came the sister of
mercy. The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought, indeed, to
behold there
Gleams of celestial light encircle her forehead
with splendour,
Such as the artist paints o'er the brows of saints
and apostles,
Or such as hangs by night o'er a city seen at a
distance.
Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of the city
celestial,
Into whose shining gates ere long their spirits
would enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the streets
deserted and silent,
Wending her quiet way, she entered the door of
the almshouse.
Sweet on the summer air was the odour of flowers
in the garden ;
And she paused on her way to gather the fairest
among them,
That the dying once more might rejoice in their
fragrance and beauty.
Then, as she mounted the stairs to the corridors,
cooled by the east wind,

Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes from
the belfry of Christ Church,
While intermingled with these, across the meadows
were wafted
Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the Swedes
in their church at Wicaco.
Soft as descending wings fell the calm of the hour
on her spirit ;
Something within her said, — “ At length thy trials
are ended ; ”
And, with light in her looks, she entered the
chambers of sickness.
Noiselessly moved about the assiduous careful
attendants,
Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching brow,
and in silence
Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and con-
cealing their faces,
Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts of snow
by the road-side.
Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline
entered,
Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she
passed, for her presence
Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the
walls of a prison.

And, as she looked around, she saw how death,
the consoler,
Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed
it for ever.

Many familiar forms had disappeared in the night-
time ;

Vacant their places were, or filled already by
strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling
of wonder,

Still she stood, with her colourless lips apart,
while a shudder

Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flow-
rets dropped from her fingers,

And from her eyes and cheeks the light and bloom
of the morning.

Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such
terrible anguish,

That the dying heard it, and started up from their
pillows.

On the pallet before her was stretched the form of
an old man.

Long, and thin, and gray were the locks that
shaded his temples ;

But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for
a moment
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its
earlier manhood ;
So are wont to be changed the faces of those that
are dying.
Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of
the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had
besprinkled its portals,
That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and
pass over.
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit
exhausted
Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths
in the darkness,
Darkness of slumber and death, for ever sinking
and sinking.
Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied
reverberations,
Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush
that succeeded
Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and
saint-like,
"Gabriel ! O my beloved !" and died away into
silence.

Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home
of his childhood ;
Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers
among them,
Village, and mountain, and woodlands ; and,
walking under their shadow,
As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in
his vision.
Tears came into his eyes ; and as slowly he lifted
his eyelids,
Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt
by his bedside.
Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the
accents unuttered
Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what
his tongue would have spoken.
Vainly he strove to rise ; and Evangeline, kneeling
beside him,
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her
bosom.
Sweet was the light of his eyes, & but it suddenly
sank into darkness,
As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind
at a casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and
the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless unsatisfied
longing,
All the dul', deep pain, and constant anguish of
patience!
And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head
to her bosom,
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured,
"Father, I thank Thee!"

Still stands the forest primeval; but far away
from its shadow,
Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers
are sleeping.
Under the humble walls of the little Catholic
churchyard,
In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and
unnoticed.
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing beside
them,
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are
at rest and for ever,
Thousands of aching brains, where theirs no longer
are busy,

Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have
ceased from their labours,
Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have com-
pleted their journey !

Still stands the forest primeval ; but under the
shade of its branches
Dwells another race, with other customs and
language.
Only along the shore of the mournful and misty
Atlantic
Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers from
exile
Wandered back to their native land to die in its
bosom.
In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the loom are
still busy ;
Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their
kirtles of homespun,
And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's
story,
While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced,
neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the
wail of the forest.

THE
COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

I.

MILES STANDISH.

IN the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land
of the Pilgrims,
To and fro in a room of his simple and
primitive dwelling,
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan
leather,
Strode with a martial air Miles Standish the
Puritan Captain.
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands
behind him, and pausing
Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of
warfare,
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the
chamber,—

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Cutlass and corslet of steel, and his trusty sword
of Damascus,
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical
Arabic sentence,
While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece,
musket, and matchlock.
Short of stature he was, but strongly built and
athletic,
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with muscles
and sinews of iron ;
Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet beard
was already
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges some-
times in November.
Near him was seated John Alden, his friend and
household companion,
Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by
the window ;
Fair haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon
complexion,
Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty
thereof, as the captives
Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed, "Not
Angles but Angels"
Youngest of all was he of the men who came in
the May-Flower.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent scribe interrupting,

Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Standish the Captain of Plymouth.

"Look at these arms," he said, "the warlike weapons that hang here

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or inspection!

This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in Flanders; this breastplate,

Well I remember the day! once saved my life in a skirmish;

Here in front you can see the very dent of the bullet

Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish arcabucero.

Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten bones of Miles Standish

Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in the Flemish morasses."

Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not up from his writing:

"Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of the bullet;

He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and our weapon!"

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Still the Captain continued, unheeding the words
of the stripling :

“See, how bright they are burnished, as if in
an arsenal hanging.

That is because I have done it myself, and not
left it to others.

Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an
excellent adage ;

So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens
and your inkhorn.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great,
invincible army,

Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest
and his matchlock,

Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and
pillage,

And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of
my soldiers !”

This he said with a smile, that danced in his eyes,
as the sunbeams

Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again
in a moment.

Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Captain
continued :

“Look ! you can see from this window my brazen
howitzer planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher who
speaks to the purpose,
Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresist-
ible logic,
Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts
of the heathen.
Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the
Indians ;
Let them come, if they like, and the sooner they
try it the better,—
Let them come, if they like, be it sagamore,
sachem, or pow-wow,
Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Toka-
mahamon !”

Long at the window he stood, and wistfully
gazed on the landscape,
Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapoury breath
of the east wind,
Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue
rim of the ocean,
Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows
and sunshine.
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like those
on the landscape,

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Gloom intermingled with light ; and his voice was
subdued with emotion,

Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he pro-
ceeded :

“ Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried
Rose Standish ;

Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by
the wayside !

She was the first to die of all who came in the
May-Flower !

Green above her is growing the field of wheat we
have sown there,

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves
of our people,

Lest they should count them and see how many
already have perished ! ”

Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and
down and was thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books,
and among them

Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and
for binding ;

Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of
Cæsar,

Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Golding
of London,

And, as if guarded by there, between them was
standing the Bible.

Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish
paused, as if doubtful

Which of the three he should choose for his con-
solation and comfort,

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous
campaigns of the Romans,

Or the Artillery practice, designed for belligerent
Christians.

Finally down from its shelf he dragged the pon-
derous Roman,

Seated himself at the window, and opened the
book, and in silence

Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-
marks thick on the margin,

Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle was
hottest.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying
pen of the stripling,

Busily writing epistles important, to go by the
May-Flower.

Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest,
God willing!

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Homeward bound with the tidings of all that
terrible winter,

Letters written by Alden, and full of the name of
Priscilla,

Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan
maiden Priscilla !



II.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

NOTHING was heard in the room but the
hurrying pen of the stripling,
Or an occasional sigh from the labouring
heart of the Captain,
Reading the marvellous words and achievements
of Julius Cæsar.

After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his
hand palm downwards,
Heavily on the page, "A wonderful man was this
Cæsar !

You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is
a fellow

Who could both write and fight, and in both was
equally skilful !"

Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the
comely, the youthful :

"Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his
pen and his weapons.

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Somewhere I have read, but where I forget, he
could dictate

Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his
memoirs."

"Truly," continued the Captain, not heeding or
hearing the other,

"Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius
Cæsar!

Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian
village.

Than be second in Rome, and I think he was
right when he said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty, and
many times after ;

Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand
cities he conquered ;

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has
recorded ;

Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator
Brutus !

Now, do you know what he did on a certain
occasion in Flanders

When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the
front giving way too,

And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so
closely together

There was no room for their swords? Why, he
 seized a shield from a soldier,
 Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and
 commanded the captains,
 Calling on each by his name, to order forward the
 ensigns ;
 Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for
 their weapons ;
 So he won the day, the battle of Something-or-
 other.
 That's what I always say ; if you wish a thing
 to be well done,
 You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to
 others !”

All was silent again ; the Captain continued his
 reading.
 Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying
 pen of the stripling
 Writing epistles important to go next day by the
 May-Flower,
 Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan
 maiden Priscilla ;
 Every sentence began or closed with the name of
 Priscilla,

Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the
secret,

Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the
name of Priscilla !

Finally closing his book, with a bang of the
ponderous cover,

Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier ground-
ing his musket,

Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the
Captain of Plymouth :

“When you have finished your work, I have
something important to tell you.

Be not however in haste ; I can wait ; I shall not
be impatient !”

Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of
his letters,

Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful
attention :

“Speak ; for whenever you speak, I am always
ready to listen,

Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles
Standish.”

Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and
culling his phrases :

“’Tis not good for a man to be alone, say the
Scriptures.

This I have said before, and again and again I
repeat it :

Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and
say it.

Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary
and dreary ;

Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing
of friendship.

Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the
maiden Priscilla.

She is alone in the world ; her father and mother
and brother

Died in the winter together ; I saw her going and
coming,

Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed
of the dying,

Patient, courageous and strong, and said to myself,
that if ever

There were angels on earth, as there are angels
in heaven,

Two have I seen and known ; and the angel whose
name is Priscilla

Holds in my desolate life the place which the other
abandoned.

Long have I cherished the thought, but never have
dared to reveal it,

134 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Being a coward in this, though valiant enough
for the most part.

Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of
Plymouth,

Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words
but of actions,

Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and heart
of a soldier.

Not in these words, you know, but this in short is
my meaning ;

I am a maker of war, and not a maker of
phrases.

You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in
elegant language,

Such as you read in your books of the pleadings
and wooings of lovers,

Such as you think best adapted to win the heart
of a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-
haired, taciturn stripling,

All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed,
bewildered,

Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject
with lightness,

Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand
still in his bosom,

Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken
by lightning,

Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered
than answered :

“ Such a message as that, I am sure I should
mangle and mar it ;

If you would have it well done,—I am only
repeating your maxim,—

You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to
others !”

But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn
from his purpose,

Gravely shaking his head, made answer the
Captain of Plymouth :

“ Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to
gainsay it ;

But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder
for nothing.

Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of
phrases.

I can march up to a fortress and summon the place
to surrender,

But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I
dare not.

136 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth
of a cannon,

But of a thundering 'No!' point-blank from the
mouth of a woman,—

That, I confess, I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed
to confess it!

So you must grant my request, for you are an
elegant scholar,

Having the graces of speech, and skill in the
turning of phrases."

Taking the hand of his friend, who still was
reluctant and doubtful,

Holding it long in his own, and pressing it kindly,
he added:

"Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is
the feeling that prompts me;

Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the name
of our friendship!"

Then made answer John Alden: "The name of
friendship is sacred:

What you demand in that name, I have not the
power to deny you!"

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and mould-
ing the gentler;

Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went
on his errand.

III.

THE LOVER'S ERRAND.

SO the strong will prevailed, and Alden went
on his errand,
Out of the street of the village, and into the
paths of the forest,
Into the tranquil woods, where blue-birds and
robins were building
Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens
of verdure,
Peaceful, aërial cities of joy and affection and
freedom.
All around him was calm, but within him com-
motion and conflict,
Love contending with friendship, and self with
each generous impulse.
To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving
and dashing,
As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the
vessel,

138 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the
ocean I

“Must I relinquish it all,” he cried with a wild
lamentation,

“Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the
illusion?

Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and
worshipped in silence?

Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and
the shadow

Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New
England?

Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths
of corruption

Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of
passion:

Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions
of Satan.

All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it
distinctly!

This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me
in anger,

For I have followed too much the heart's desires
and devices,

Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols
of Baal.

This is the cross I must bear ; the sin and the
swift retribution."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden
went on his errand ;
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled
over pebble and shallow,
Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers
blooming around him,
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonder-
ful sweetness,
Children lost in the woods, and covered with
leaves in their slumber.
"Puritan flowers," he said, "and the type of
Puritan maidens,
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of
Priseilla !
So I will take them to her ; to Priseilla the May-
flower of Plymouth,
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting-gift will
I take them ;
Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and
wither and perish,
Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the
giver."

140 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went
on his errand :
Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the
ocean,
Sailless, sombre, and cold with the comfortless
breath of the east wind ;
Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a
meadow ;
Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice
of Priscilla
Singing the Hundredth Psalm, the grand old
Puritan anthem,
Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of the
Psalmist,
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and
comforting many.
Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form
of a maiden
Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like
a snow-drift
Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the
ravenous spindle,
While with her foot on the treadle she guided the
wheel in its motion.
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-
book of Ainsworth,

Printed in Amsterdam, the words and music
together,
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall
of a churchyard,
Darkened and overhung by the running vine of
the verses.
Such was the book from whose pages she sang the
old Puritan anthem,
She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the
forest,
Making the humble house and the modest apparel
of homespun
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth
of her being !
Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold
and relentless,
Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight
and woe of his errand ;
All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes
that had vanished.
All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless-
mansion,
Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful
faces.
Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he
said it.

142 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

“ Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough
look backwards ;
Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers
of life to its fountains,
Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead and the
hearths of the living,
It is the will of the Lord ; and his mercy endureth
for ever ! ”

So he entered the house ; and the hum of the
wheel and the singing
Suddenly ceased ; for Priscilla, aroused by his step
on the threshold,
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in
signal of welcome,
Saying, “ I knew it was you, when I heard your
step in the passage ;
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing
and spinning.”
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought
of him had been mingled
Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the
heart of the maiden,
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the
flowers for an answer,

Finding no words for his thought. He remembered
that day in the winter,
After the first great snow, when he broke a path
from the village,
Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that
encumbered the doorway,
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the
house, and Priscilla
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat
by the fireside,
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of
her in the snow-storm.
Had he but spoken then ! perhaps not in vain had
he spoken ;
Now it was all too late ; the golden moment had
vanished !
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the
flowers for an answer

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and
the beautiful Spring-time,
Talked of their friends at home, and the May-
Flower that sailed on the morrow.
“ I have been thinking all day,” said gently the
Puritan maiden,

144 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

“Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of
the hedge-rows of England,—
They are in blossom now, and the country is all
like a garden ;
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the
lark and the linnet,
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of
neighbours
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip
together,
And, at the end of the street, the village church,
with the ivy
Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves
in the churchyard.
Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me
my religion ;
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back
in Old England.
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it : I
almost
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely
and wretched.”

Thereupon answered the youth : “Indeed I do
not condemn you ;

Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in
this terrible winter.

Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger
to lean on ;

So I have come to you now, with an offer and
proffer of marriage

Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the
Captain of Plymouth !”

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous
writer of letters,—

Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in
beautiful phrases,

But came straight to the point, and blurted it out
like a schoolboy :

Even the Captain himself could hardly have said
it more bluntly.

Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the
Puritan :—

Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with
wonder,

Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and
rendered her speechless ;

Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the
ominous silence :

146 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

“If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very
eager to wed me,

Why does he not come himself, and take the
trouble to woo me?

If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not
worth the winning!”

Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing
the matter,

Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain
was busy,—

Had no time for such things ;—such things ! the
words grating harshly

Fell on the ear of Priscilla ; and swift as a flash
she made answer :

“Has he no time for such things, as you call it,
before he is married,

Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the
wedding?

That is the way with you men ; you don't under-
stand us, you cannot.

When you have made up your minds, after thinking
of this one and that one,

Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with
another,

Then you make known your desire, with abrupt
and sudden avowal,

And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps,
that a woman
Does not respond at once to a love that she never
suspected,
Does not attain at a bound the height to which
you have been climbing.
This is not right nor just : for surely a woman's
affection
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the
asking.
When one is truly in love, one not only says it,
but shows it.
Had he but waited a while, had he only showed
that he loved me,
Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at
last might have won me,
Old and rough as he is ; but now it never can
happen."

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words
of Priscilla,
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, per-
suading, expanding ;
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his
battles in Flanders,

148 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

How with the people of God he had chosen to
suffer affliction,

How, in return for his zeal, they had made him
Captain of Plymouth ;

He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree
plainly

Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in
Lancashire, England,

Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of
Thurston de Standish ;

Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely
defrauded,

Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a
cock argent,

Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the
blazon.

He was a man of honour, of noble and generous
nature ;

Though he was rough, he was kindly · she knew
how during the winter

He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle
as woman's ;

Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it,
and headstrong,

Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and
placable always.

Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was
little of stature ;
For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly,
courageous ;
Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in
England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife
of Miles Standish !

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and
eloquent language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his
rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and with eyes over
running with laughter,
Said, in a tremulous voice, " Why don't you speak
for yourself, John ? "



IV.

JOHN ALDEN.

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed and
bewildered,
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered
alone by the sea-side ;
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his head
to the east wind,
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and fever
within him.
Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptic
splendours,
Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the
Apostle,
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper,
and sapphire,
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets up-
lifted
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who
measured the city.

“ Welcome, O wind of the East ! ” he exclaimed
in his wild exultation,
“ Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves
of the misty Atlantic !
Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measureless
meadows of sea grass,
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottoes and
gardens of ocean !
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead,
and wrap me
Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the fever
within me ! ”

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was
moaning and tossing,
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands of
the sea-shore.
Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of
passions contending ;
Love triumphed and crowned, and friendship
wounded and bleeding,
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate plead-
ings of duty !
“ Is it my fault, ” he said, “ that the maiden has
chosen between us ? ”

152 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Is it my fault that he failed, — my fault that I am
the victor ! ”

Then within him there thundered a voice, like the
voice of the Prophet :

“ It hath displeased the Lord ! ” — and he thought
of David's transgression,

Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the
front of the battle !

Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and
self condemnation,

Overwhelmed him at once ; and he cried in the
deepest contrition :

“ It hath displeased the Lord ! It is the tempta-
tion of Satan ! ”

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea,
and beheld there

Dimly the shadowy form of the May Flower riding
at anchor,

Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the
morrow ;

Heard the voices of men through the mist, the
rattle of cordage

Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and
the sailors' “ Ay, ay, Sir ! ”

Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping
air of the twilight.
Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and
stared at the vessel,
Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a
phantom,
Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the
beckoning shadow.
"Yes, it is plain to me now," he murmured ;
"the hand of the Lord is
Leading me out of the land of darkness, the
bondage of error,
Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its
waters around me,
Hiding me, cutting me off from the cruel thoughts
that pursue me.
Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land
will abandon,
Her whom I may not love, and him whom my
heart has offended.
Better to be in my grave in the green old church-
yard in England,
Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of
my kindred ;
Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame
and dishonour ;

154 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of the
narrow chamber

With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel
that glimmers

Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers
of silence and darkness,—

Yes, as the marriage-ring of the great espousal
hereafter !”

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of
his strong resolution,

Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along
in the twilight,

Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent
and sombre,

Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of
Plymouth,

Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of
the evening.

Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubt-
able Captain

Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages
of Cæsar,

Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or
Brabant or Flanders.

“Long have you been on your errand,” he said
with a cheery demeanour,
Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears
not the issue.
“Not far off is the house, although the woods are
between us ;
But you have lingered so long, that while you
were going and coming
I have fought ten battles and sacked and dem-
olished a city.
Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that
has happened.’

Then John Alden spake, and related the won-
drous adventure,
From beginning to end, minutely, just as it
happened ;
How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped
in his courtship,
Only smoothing a little, and softening down her
refusal.
But when he came at length to the words Priscilla
had spoken,
Words so tender and cruel : “Why don’t you
speak for yourself, John ?”

156 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped
on the floor, till his armour
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound
of sinister omen.
All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden
explosion,
Even as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction
around it.
Wildly he shouted, and loud: "John Alden! you
have betrayed me!
Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have supplanted,
defrauded, betrayed me!
One of my ancestors ran his sword through the
heart of Wat Tyler;
Who shall prevent me from running my own
through the heart of a traitor?
Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason
to friendship!
You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished
and loved as a brother;
You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my
cup, to whose keeping
I have entrusted my honour, my thoughts the
most sacred and secret,—
You, too, Brutus! ah woe to the name of friend-
ship hereafter!

Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were mine,
but henceforward
Let there be nothing between us save war and
implacable hatred !”

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and strode
about in the chamber,
Chafing and choking with rage ; like cords were
the veins on his temples.
But in the midst of his anger a man appeared at
the doorway,
Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent
importance,
Rumours of danger and war and hostile incursions
of Indians !
Straightway the Captain paused, and, without
further question or parley,
Took from the nail on the wall his sword with its
scabbard of iron,
Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning
fiercely, departed.
Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the
scabbard
Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away in the
the distance.

158 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth into
the darkness,
Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was hot
with the insult,
Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his
hands as in childhood,
Prayed in the silence of night to the Father who
seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrathful
away to the council,
Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting
his coming ;
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in
deportment,
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest to
heaven,
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent Elder
of Plymouth.
God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat
for this planting,
Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a
nation ;
So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith of
the people !

Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude
stern and defiant,
Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious
in aspect ;
While on the table before them was lying un-
opened a Bible,
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded, printed
in Holland,
And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattle-
snake glittered,
Filled, like a quiver, with arrows ; a signal and
challenge of warfare,
Brought by the Indian, and speaking with arrowy
tongues of defiance.
This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and
heard them debating
What were an answer befitting the hostile message
and menace,
Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting,
objecting ;
One voice only for peace, and that the voice of the
Elder,
Judging it wise and well that some at least were
converted,
Rather than any were slain, for this was but
Christia. behaviour !

Then out spake Miles Standish, the stalwart Cap-
tain of Plymouth,
Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was
husky with anger :

“What ! do you mean to make war with milk
and the water of roses ?

Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer
planted

There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot
red devils ?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a
savage

Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the
mouth of the cannon !”

Thereupon answered and said the excellent Elder
of Plymouth,

Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent
language :

“Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other
Apostles :

Not from the cannon's mouth were the tongues of
fire they spake with !”

But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the
Captain,

Who had advanced to the table, and thus con-
tinued discoursing :

“Leave this matter to me, for to me by right it
pertaineth.

War is a terrible trade ; but in the cause that is
righteous,

Sweet is the smell of powder ; and thus I answer
the challenge !”

Then from the rattlesnake’s skin, with a sudden,
contemptuous gesture,

Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with powder
and bullets

Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to the
savage,

Saying, in thundering tones, “ Here, take it ! this
is your answer !”

Silently out of the room then glided the glistening
savage,

Bearing the serpent’s skin, and seeming himself
like a serpent,

Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the depths
of the forest.

V.

THE SAILING OF THE MAY-FLOWER.

JUST in the gray of the dawn, as the mists
uprose from the meadows,
There was a stir and a sound in the slum-
bering village of Plymouth ;
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order im-
perative, "Forward !"
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and
then silence.
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out of
the village.
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his
valorous army,
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend
of the white men,
Northward marching to quell the sudden revolt of
the savage.
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty men
of King David ;

THE SAILING OF THE MAY-FLOWER. 163

Giants in heart they were, who believed in God
and the Bible,—

Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites and
Philistines.

Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of
morning ;

Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows,
advancing,

Fired along the line, and in regular order re-
treated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length
the village of Plymouth

Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its
manifold labours.

Sweet was the air and soft ; slowly the smoke from
the chimneys

Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily
eastward ;

Men came forth from the doors, and paused and
talked of the weather,

Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing
fair for the May-Flower ;

Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the
dangers that menaced,

164 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

He being gone, the town, and what should be
done in his absence.

Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of
women

Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the
household.

Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows re-
joiced at his coming ;

Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the
mountain !

Beautiful on the sails of the May-Flower riding at
anchor,

Battered and blackened and worn by all the
storms of the winter.

Loosely against her masts was hanging and flap-
ping her canvas,

Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands
of the sailors.

Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the
ocean,

Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward ;
anon rang

Loud o'er field and forest the cannon's roar, and
the echoes

Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of
departure !

THE SAILING OF THE MAY-FLOWER. 165

Ah ! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of
the people !

Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read
from the Bible,

Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in fervent
entreaty !

Then from their houses in haste came forth the
Pilgrims of Plymouth,

Men and women and children, all hurrying down
to the sea-shore,

Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the
May-Flower,

Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving them
here in the desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night
he had lain without slumber,

Turning and tossing about in the heat and unrest
of his fever.

He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back
late from the council,

Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter and
murmur,

Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes it
sounded like swearing.

166 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Once he had come to the bed, and stood there a
moment in silence ;

Then he had turned away, and said : " I will not
awake him ;

Let him sleep on, it is best ; for what is the use of
more talking ? "

Then he extinguished the light, and threw himself
down on his pallet,

Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break
of the morning,—

Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in
his campaigns in Flanders,—

Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for
action.

But with the dawn he arose : in the twilight Alden
beheld him

Put on his corslet of steel, and all the rest of his
armour,

Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of
Damascus,

Take from the corner his musket, and so stride
out of the chamber.

Often the heart of the youth had burned and
yearned to embrace him,

Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring for
pardon ;

THE SAILING OF THE MAY-FLOWER. 167

All the old friendship came back, with its tender
and grateful emotions ;
But his pride overmastered the nobler nature
within him,—
Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the burning
fire of the insult.
So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but
spake not,
Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death,
and he spake not !
Then he arose from his bed, and heard what the
people were saying,
Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen and
Richard and Gilbert,
Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading
of Scripture,
And, with the others, in haste went hurrying down
to the sea-shore,
Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to
their feet as a door-step
Into a world unknown,—the corner-stone of a
nation !

There with his boat was the Master, already a
little impatient

168 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might
shift to the eastward,
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odour of
ocean about him,
Speaking with this one and that, and cramming
letters and parcels
Into his pockets capacious, and messages
mingled together
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly
bewildered.
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed
on the gunwale,
One still firm on the rock, and talking at times
with the sailor,
Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and eager
for starting.
He too was eager to go, and thus put an end to
his anguish,
Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than
keel is or canvas,
Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that would
rise and pursue him.
But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the form
of Priscilla
Standing dejected among them, unconscious of all
that was passing.

THE SAILING OF THE MAY-FLOWER. 169

Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined
his intention,
Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, im-
ploring, and patient,
That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled
from its purpose,
As from a verge of a crag, where one step more
is destruction.
Strange is the heart of man, with its quick
mysterious instincts ;
Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are
moments,
Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the
wall adamantine !
“ Here I remain ! ” he exclaimed, as he looked at
the heavens above him,
Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered
the mist and the madness,
Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was stagger-
ing headlong.
“ Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the
ether above me,
Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckoning
over the ocean.
There is another hand, that is not so spectral and
ghost-like,

170 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine
for protection.

Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the
ether !

Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt
me ; I heed not

Either your warning or menace, or any omen of
evil !

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so
wholesome,

As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is
pressed by her footsteps.

Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible
presence

Hover around her for ever, protecting, supporting
her weakness ;

Yes ! as my foot was the first that stepped on this
rock at the landing,

So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last
at the leaving !”

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified
air and important,

Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the wind
and the weather,

THE SAILING OF THE MAY-FLOWER. 171

Walked about on the sands ; and the people
crowded around him

Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful
remembrance.

Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were
grasping a tiller,

Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off
to his vessel,

Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and
flurry,

Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness
and sorrow,

Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing
but Gospel !

Lo the sound of the oars was the last farewell
of the Pilgrims.

O strong hearts and true ! not one went back in
the May-Flower !

No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to
this ploughing !

Soon was heard on board the shouts and songs
of the sailors

Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the
ponderous anchor.

172 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Then the yards were braced, and all sail set to the
west wind,
Blowing steady and strong ; and the May-Flower
sailed from the harbour,
Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far
to the southward
Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the
First Encounter,
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the
open Atlantic,
Borne on the sand of the sea, and the swelling
hearts of the Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding sail
of the vessel,
Much endeared to them all, as something living
and human ;
Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapped in
a vision prophetic,
Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of
Plymouth
Said, "Let us pray !" and they prayed, and
thanked the Lord and took courage.
Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the
rock, and above them

THE SAILING OF THE MAY-FLOWER. 173

Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of
death, and their kindred
Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in
the prayer that they uttered.
Sun-illumined and white, on the eastern verge of
the ocean
Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in
a graveyard ;
Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of
escaping.
Lo ! as they turned to depart, they saw the form
of an Indian,
Watching them from the hill ; but while they
spake with each other,
Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying,
“ Look ! ” he had vanished.
So they returned to their homes ; but Alden
lingered a little,
Musing alone on the shore, and watching the wash
of the billows
Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle and
flash of the sunshine,
Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over the
waters.

VI.

PRISCILLA.

THUS for a while he stood, and mused
by the shore of the ocean,
Thinking of many things, and most of all
of Priscilla :

And as if thought had the power to draw to
itself, like the loadstone,
Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of its
nature,
Lo ! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was standing
beside him.

“Are you so much offended you will not speak
to me ?” said she,
“Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when
you were pleading
Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impul-
sive and wayward,

Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful
perhaps of decorum?
Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so
frankly, for saying
What I ought not to have said, yet now I can
never unsay it :
For there are moments in life, when the heart is
so full of emotion,
That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths
like a pebble
Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its
secret,
Spilt on the ground like water, can never be
gathered together.
Yesterday I was shocked when I heard you speak
of Miles Standish,
Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects
into virtues,
Praising his courage and strength, and even his
fighting in Flanders,
As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of
a woman,
Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalt-
ing your hero.
Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible
impulse.

176 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the
friendship between us,
Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily
broken !”

Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the
friend of Miles Standish :

“ I was not angry with you, with myself alone I
was angry,

Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in
my keeping.”

“ No !” interrupted the maiden, with answer
prompt and decisive ;

“ No ; you were angry with me, for speaking so
frankly and freely.

It was wrong, I acknowledge ; for it is the fate of
a woman,

Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost
that is speechless,

Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of
its silence.

Hence is the inner life of so many suffering
women

Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean
rivers

Running through caverns of darkness, unheard,
unseen, and unfruitful,

Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and
profitless murmurs."

Thereupon answered John Alden, the young man,
the lover of women :

"Heaven forbid it, Priscilla ; and truly they seem
to me always

More like the beautiful rivers that watered the
garden of Eden,

More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of
Havilah flowing,

Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet
of the garden ! "

"Ah, by these words, I can see," again inter-
rupted the maiden,

"How very little you prize me, or care for what
I am saying.

When from the depths of my heart, in pain and
with secret misgiving,

Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only
and kindness,

Straightway you take up my words, that are plain
and direct in earnest,

Turn them away from their meaning, and answer
with flattering phrases.

This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best
that is in you ;

178 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

For I know and esteem you, and feel that your
nature is noble,
Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal
level.
Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it
perhaps the more keenly
If you say aught that implies I am only as one
among many,
If you make use of those common and compli-
mentary phrases
Most men think so fine, in dealing and speaking
with women,
But which women reject as insipid, if not as
insulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden : and listened and
looked at Priscilla,
Thinking he never had seen her more fair, more
divine in her beauty.
He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the cause
of another,
Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seeking
in vain for an answer.
So the maiden went on, and little divined or
imagined

What was at work in his heart, that made him so awkward and speechless.

“Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions of friendship.

It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to declare it :

I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak with you always.

So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted to hear you

Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the Captain Miles Standish.

For I must tell you the truth : much more to me is your friendship

Than all the love he could give. were he twice the hero you think him.”

Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who eagerly grasped it,

Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were aching and bleeding so sorely,

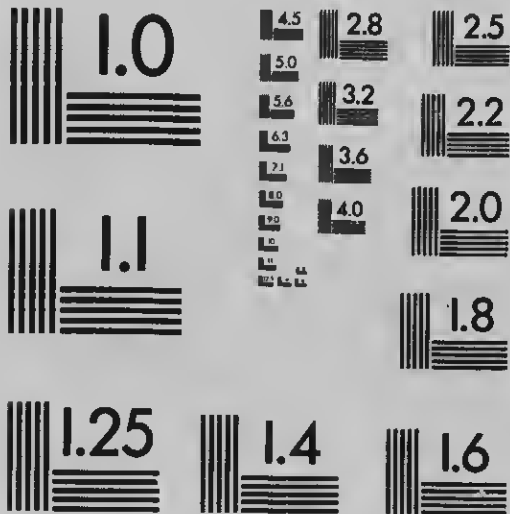
Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said, with a voice full of feeling :

“Yes, we must ever be friends ; and of all who offer you friendship



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Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest, and
dearest !”

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering sail of
the May-Flower,
Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the
horizon,
Homeward together they walked with a strange
indefinite feeling,
That all the rest had departed and left them alone
in the desert.
But, as they went through the fields in the blessing
and smile of the sunshine,
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said, very
archly :
“Now that our terrible Captain has gone in
pursuit of the Indians,
Where he is happier far than he would be com-
manding a household,
You may speak holdly, and tell me of all that
happened between you,
When you returned last night, and said how un-
grateful you found me.”
Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her the
whole of the story, —

Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath of
Miles Standish.

Vererent the maiden smiled, and said, between
laughing and earnest,

“He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a
moment !”

But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how
much he had suffered,—

How he had even determined to sail that day in
the May-Flower,

And had remained for her sake, on hearing the
dangers that threatened,—

All her manner was changed, and she said with a
faltering accent,

“Truly I thank you for this : how good you have
been to me always !”

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem
journeys,

Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly
backward,

Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs
of contrition ;

Slowly but steadily onward, receding, yet ever
advancing,


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Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of
his longings,
Urged by the fervour of love, and withheld by
remorseful misgivings.



VII.

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH.

EANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish
was marching steadily northward,
Winding through forest and swamp, and
along the trend of the sea-shore.
All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his
anger
Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous
odour of powder
Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the
scents of the forest.
Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved
his discomfort ;
He who was used to success, and to easy victories
always,
Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn
by a maiden,
Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend
whom most he had trusted !

Ah ! 'twas too much to be borne, and he fretted
and chafed in his armour !

“ I alone am to blame,” he muttered, “ for mine
was the folly.

What was a rough old soldier, grown grim and
gray in the harness,
Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the
wooing of maidens ?

'Twas but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish like
so many others !

What I thought was a flower, is only a weed, and
is worthless ;

Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away,
and henceforward

Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer
of dangers !”

Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and
discomfort,

While he was marching by day or lying at night
in the forest,

Looking up at the trees, and the constellations
beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an Indian
encampment

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH. 185

Pitched on the head of a meadow, between the
sea and the forest ;
Women at work by the tents, and the warriors,
horrid with war-paint,
Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking
together ;
Who, when they saw from afar the sudden
approach of the white men,
Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate, and sabre,
and musket,
Straightway leaped to their feet, and two from
among them advancing,
Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs
as a present ;
Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts
there was hatred.
Braves of the tribes were these, and brothers
gigantic in stature,
Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king
of Bashan ;
One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called
Wattawamat.
Round their necks were suspended their knives in
scabbards of wampum,
Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp
as a needle.

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Other arms had they none, for they were cunning
and crafty.

“Welcome, English!” they said,—these words
they had learned from the traders

Touching at times on the coast, to barter and
chaffer for peltries.

Then in their native tongue they began to parley
with Standish,

Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok,
friend of the white man,

Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for
muskets and powder,

Kept by the white man, they said, concealed, with
the plague, in his cellars,

Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother the
red man!

But when Standish refused, and said he would
give them the Bible,

Suddenly changing their tone, they began to boast
and to bluster.

Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in front
of the other,

And, with a lofty demeanour, thus vauntingly
spake to the Captain:

“Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes of
the Captain,

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH. 187

Angry is he in his heart ; but the heart of the
brave Wattawamat
Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a
woman,

But on a mountain, at night, from an oak-tree
riven by lightning,

Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons
about him,

Shouting, ' Who is there here to fight with the
brave Wattawamat ? ' "

Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the
blade on his left hand,

Held it aloft, and displayed a woman's face on the
handle,

Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister
meaning :

" I have another at home, with the face of a man
on the handle ;

By and by they shall marry ; and there will be
plenty of children ! "

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, in-
sulting Miles Standish :

While with his fingers he patted the knife that
hung at his bosom,

188 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it
back, as he muttered,

“By and by it shall see ; it shall eat ; ah, ah ! but
shall speak not !

This is the mighty Captain the white men have
sent to destroy us !

He is a little man ; let him go and work with the
women !”

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and
figures of Indians

Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in
the forest,

Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their
bow-strings,

Drawing about him still closer and closer the net
of their ambush.

But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and
treated them smoothly ;

So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the
days of the fathers.

But when he heard their defiance, the boast, the
taunt, and the insult,

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of
Thurston de Standish,

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH. 189

Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the
veins of his temples.

Headlong he leapt on the boaster, and snatching
his knife from its scabbard,

Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward,
the savage

Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierce-
ness upon it.

Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound
of the war-whoop,

And, like a flurry of snow, on the whistling wind
of December,

Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of
feathery arrows.

Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the
cloud came the lightning,

Out of the lightning thunder ; and death unseen
ran before it.

Frightened the savages fled for shelter in swamp
and in thicket,

Hotly pursued and beset ; but their sachem, the
brave Wattawamat,

Fled not ; he was dead. Unswerving and swift
had a bullet

Passed through his brain, and he fell with both
hands clutching the greensward,

190 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the
land of his fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the warriors
lay, and above them,
Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend
of the white man.

Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart
Captain of Plymouth :

“Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his
strength, and his stature, —

Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little
man ; but I see now

Big enough have you been to lay him speechless
before you !”

Thus the first battle was fought and won by the
stalwart Miles Standish.

When the tidings thereof were brought to the
village of Plymouth,

And as a trophy of war the head of the brave
Wattawamat

Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once
was a church and a fortress,

All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord.
and took courage.

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH. 191

Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of
terror,

Thanking God in her heart that she had not
married Miles Standish ;


Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from
his battles,

He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and
reward of his valour.



VIII.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

 MONTH after month passed away, and in
Autumn the ships of the merchants
Came with kindred and friends, with
cattle and corn for the Pilgrims.
All in the village was peace ; the men were intent
on their labours,
Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot
and with mere-stead,
Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the
grass in the meadows,
Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer
in the forest.
All in the village was peace ; but at times the
rumour of warfare
Filled the air with alarm and the apprehension of
danger.
Bravely the stalwart Miles Standish was scouring
the land with his forces,

Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien
armies,
Till his name had become a sound of fear to the
nations.
Anger was still in his heart, but at times remorse
and contrition,
Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate
outbreak,
Came like a rushing tide, that encounters the rush
of a river,
Staying its current a while, but making it bitter and
brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new
habitation,
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from the
firs of the forest.
Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was
covered with rushes ;
Latticed the windows were, and the window-panes
were of paper,
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain were
excluded.
There too he dug a well, and around it planted an
orchard :

194 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Still may be seen to this day some trace of the
well and the orchard.

Close to the house was the stall, where, safe and
secure from annoyance,

Raghorn, the snow-white steer, that had fallen to
Alden's allotment

In the division of cattle, might ruminant in the
night-time

Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant by
sweet pennyroyal.

Oft when his labour was finished, with eager
feet would the dreamer

Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to
the house of Priscilla,

Led by allusions romantic and subtle deceptions
of fancy,

Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the
semblance of friendship.

Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned the
walls of his dwelling ;

Ever of her he thought, when he delved in the
soil of his garden ;

Ever of her he thought, when he read in his Bible
on Sunday

Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is described
in the Proverbs, —
How the heart of her husband doth safely trust in
her always,
How all the days of her life she will do him good
and not evil,
How she seeketh the wool and the flax and
worketh with gladness,
How she layeth her hand to the spindle and
holdeth the distaff,
How she is not afraid of the snow for herself or
her household,
Knowing her household are clothed with the
scarlet cloth of her weaving |

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in the
Autumn,
Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her
dexterous fingers,
As if the thread she was spinning were that of his
life and his fortune,
After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the sound
of the spindle.
“Truly, Priscilla,” he said, “when I see you
spinning and spinning,

196 THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful
of others,

Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed
in a moment ;

You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful Spinner."

Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter and
swifter ; the spindle

Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped
short in her fingers,

While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the
mischief, continued :

"You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the
queen of Helvetia ;

She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of
Southampton,

Who, as she rode on her pal(rey, o'er valley and
meadow and mountain,

Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed
to her saddle.

She was so thrifty and good, that her name passed
into a proverb.

So shall it be with your own, when the spinning-
wheel shall no longer

Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its
chambers with music.

Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how it
was in their childhood,
Praising the good old times, and the days of
Priscilla the spinner !”
Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful
Puritan maiden,
Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him
whose praise was the sweetest,
Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein of
her spinning.
Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering
phrases of Alden :
“Come, you must not be idle ; if I am a pattern
for housewives,
Show yourself equally worthy of being the model
of husbands ;
Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it
ready for knitting.
Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions
have changed and the manners,
Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old
times of John Alden !”
Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his
hands she adjusted,
He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms ex-
tended before him,

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She standing graceful, erect, and winding the
thread from his fingers,
Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of
holding,
Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled
expertly
Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares—for how
could she help it?—
Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in
his body.

Lo ! in the midst of this scene, a breathless
messenger entered,
Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from
the village.
Yes ; Miles Standish was dead !—an Indian had
brought them the tidings, —
Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the front
of the battle,
Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the whole
of his forces ;
All the town would be burned, and all the people
be murdered !
Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the
hearts of the hearers.

Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face
looking backward

Still at the face of the speaker, her arms uplifted
in horror ;

But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of the
arrow

Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own
and had sundered

Once and for ever the bonds that held him bound
as a captive,

Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight
of his freedom

Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of what
he was doing,

Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless form
of Priscilla,

Pressing her close to his heart, as for ever his own,
and exclaiming :

“Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man
put them asunder !”

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate
sources,

Seeing each other afar, as they leaped from the
rocks, and pursuing

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Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and
nearer,
Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the
forest ;
So these lives that had run thus far in separate
channels,
Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and
flowing asunder,
Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and
nearer,
Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the
other.



IX.

THE WEDDING-DAY.

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from
the tent of purple and scarlet,
Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in
his garments resplendent,
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light, on his
forehead,
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and
pomegranates.
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of
vapour beneath him
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at his
feet was a laver ;

This was the wedding-morn of Priscilla the
Puritan maiden.
Friends were assembled together ; the Elder and
Magistrate also
Graced the scene with their presence, and stood
like the Law and the Gospel,

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One with the sanction of earth and one with the
blessing of heaven.

Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of
Ruth and of Boaz,

Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the
words of betrothal,

Taking each other for husband and wife in the
Magistrate's presence,

After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom
of Holland.

Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent Elder
of Plymouth

Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were
founded that day in affection,

Speaking of life and of death, and imploring
divine benedictions.

Lo ! when the service was ended, a form ap-
peared on the threshold,

Clad in armour of steel, a sombre and sorrowful
figure !

Why does the bridegroom start and stare at the
strange apparition ?

Why does the bride turn pale and hide her face
on his shoulder ?

Is it a phantom of air,—a bodiless, spectral
illusion?
Is it a ghost from a grave, that has come to forbid
the betrothal?
Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited,
unwelcomed;
Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times
an expression
Softening the gloom and revealing the warm
heart hidden beneath them,
As when across the sky the driving rack of the
rain-cloud
Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun by
its brightness.
Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips,
but was silent,
As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting
intention.
But when were ended the troth and the prayer
and the last benediction,
Into the room it strode, and the people beheld
with amazement
Bodily there in his armour Miles Standish, the
Captain of Plymouth!
Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with
emotion, "Forgive me!

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I have been angry and hurt,—too long have I
cherished the feeling ;

I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God !
it is ended.

Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the
veins of Hugh Standish,

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning
for error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish the
friend of John Alden."

Thereupon answered the bridegroom : " Let all
be forgotten between us,—

All save the dear old friendship, and that shall
grow older and dearer !"

Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, saluted
Priscilla,

Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned
gentry in England,

Something of camp and of court, of town and of
country, commingled,

Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly
lauding her husband.

Then he said with a smile : " I should have
remembered the adage,—

If you would be well served, you must serve
yourself : and moreover,

No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season
of Christmas !”

Great was the people's amazement, and greater,
yet their rejoicing,
Thus to behold once more the sunburnt face of
their Captain,
Whom they had mourned as dead ; and they
gathered and crowded about him,
Eager to see him and hear 'im, forgetful of bride
and of bridegroom,
Questioning, answering, laughing, and each inter-
rupting the other,
Till the good Captain declared, being quite over-
powered and bewildered,
He had rather by far break into an Indian en-
campment,
Than come again to a wedding to which he had
not been invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and stood
with the bride at the doorway,
Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and
beautiful morning.
Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and sad
in the sunshine,

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Lay extended before them the land of toil and
privation ;
There were the graves of the dead, and the barren
waste of the sea-shore,
There the familiar fields, the groves of pine, and
the meadows ;
But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the
Garden of Eden,
Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was
the sound of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise
and stir of departure,
Friends coming forth from the house, and im-
patient of longer delaying,
Each with his plan for the day, and the work that
was left uncompleted.
Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations
of wonder,
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so
proud of Priscilla,
Brought out his snow-white steer, obeying the
hand of its master,
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its
nostrils,

Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed
for a saddle.

She should not walk, he said, through the dust
and heat of the noonday ;

Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod along
like a peasant.

Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by the
others,

Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in the
hand of her husband,

Gaily, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her
palfrey.

“Nothing is wanting now,” he said, with a smile,
“but the distaff ;

Then you would be in truth my queen, my beauti-
ful Bertha !”

Onward the bridal procession now moved to
their new habitation,

Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing
together.

Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed
the ford in the forest,

Pleased with the image that passed, like a dream
of love, through its bosom,

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Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths of the
azure abysses.

Down through the golden leaves the sun was
pouring his splendours,

Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches
above them suspended,

Mingled their odorous breath with the balm of
the pine and the fir-tree,

Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the
valley of Eschol.

Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pastoral
ages,

Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling
Rebecca and Isaac,

Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful
always,

Love immortal and young in the endless suc-
cession of lovers.

So through the Plymouth woods passed onward
the bridal procession.

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